

MSC Fisheries Certification Process



Version 2.2, 25 March 2020

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The MSC prohibits any modification of part or all of the contents in any form.

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Responsibility for these requirements

The Marine Stewardship Council (MSC) is responsible for these requirements.

Readers should verify that they are using the latest copy of this and other documents. Updated documents, together with a master list of all available MSC documents, can be found on the MSC website (msc.org).

Versions published

Version no.	Date	Description of amendment
1.0	15 August 2011	First version issued for application by Conformity Assessment Bodies (CABs).
1.1	24 October 2011	Version issued incorporating revised Group Chain of Custody (CoC) requirements and correcting typos, page numbering, wrong and missing referencing and unreadable flowcharts.
1.2	10 January 2012	Version issued incorporating Technical Advisory Board 20 agreed changes regarding reassessment, Objection Procedure, modifications to the default assessment tree to assess bivalves, implementation timeframes and Aquaculture Stewardship Council (ASC) requirements. Minor edits, comprised correction of wrong and missing referencing, typos and unreadable figures.
1.3	14 January 2013	Version issued incorporating Technical Advisory Board 21 and Board of Trustees agreed changes. Minor edits and clarifications were also incorporated.
2.0	1 October 2014	Version issued incorporating changes to the standard as a result of the MSC Fisheries Standard review and changes to CAB procedures as a result of the speed and cost review.
2.1	31 August 2018	Version issued incorporating changes to the assessment process regarding streamlining, harmonisation and labour policy development topics.
2.2	25 March 2020	Version issued incorporating changes to: the confirmation of scope process, defining the Unit of Assessment and Unit of Certification, conditions, and the expedited audit process. Minor edits and clarifications were also incorporated.

Marine Stewardship Council

Vision

Our vision is of the world's oceans teeming with life, and seafood supplies safeguarded for this and future generations.

Mission

Our mission is to use our ecolabel and fishery certification program to contribute to the health of the world's oceans by recognising and rewarding sustainable fishing practices, influencing the choices people make when buying seafood, and working with our partners to transform the seafood market to a sustainable basis.

General introduction

Fisheries certification

With international consultation with stakeholders, the MSC has developed standards for sustainable fishing and seafood traceability. The standards ensure that MSC labelled seafood comes from, and can be traced back to, a sustainable fishery.

MSC standards and requirements meet global best practice guidelines for certification and labelling programs.

The MSC Fisheries Standard sets out requirements that a fishery must meet to enable it to claim that its fish come from a well-managed and sustainable source.

Throughout the world, fisheries are using good management practices to safeguard jobs, secure fish stocks for the future and help protect the marine environment. The science-based MSC environmental standard for sustainable fishing offers fisheries a way to confirm sustainability, using a credible, independent third-party assessment process. Certification means sustainable fisheries can be recognised and rewarded in the marketplace and gives an assurance to consumers that their seafood comes from a well-managed and sustainable source.

The MSC Fisheries Standard applies to wild-capture fisheries that meet the scope requirements provided in Section 7.4.

The MSC Fisheries Standard comprises of the following core Principles:

Principle 1: Sustainable target fish stocks

A fishery must be conducted in a manner that does not lead to over-fishing or depletion of the exploited populations and, for those populations that are depleted, the fishery must be conducted in a manner that demonstrably leads to their recovery.

Principle 2: Environmental impact of fishing

Fishing operations should allow for the maintenance of the structure, productivity, function and diversity of the ecosystem (including habitat and associated dependent and ecologically related species) on which the fishery depends.

Principle 3: Effective management

The fishery is subject to an effective management system that respects local, national and international laws and standards and incorporates institutional and operational frameworks that require use of the resource to be responsible and sustainable.

Implementation timeframes

Effective date of the Fisheries Certification Process v2.2

Publication date: 25 March 2020

Effective date: 25 September 2020

CABs shall conduct any assessment process (initial assessment, surveillance audit, scope extension, expedited audit, or reassessment) that is announced on or after 25 September 2020 in conformity with the MSC Fisheries Certification Process (FCP) v2.2.

Any CAB may elect to use the FCP v2.2 as of the publication date (25 March 2020) if they are ready to do so and templates and training are ready.

Unit of Assessment (UoA) and Unit of Certification (UoC)

For fisheries that are certified (including those that are suspended) or have announced an initial assessment, reassessment or scope extension before 25 September 2020, CABs shall apply the Unit of Assessment (UoA) and Unit of Certification (UoC) requirements (FCP 7.5.2, 7.5.3 and 7.5.6) by 25 March 2023. CABs shall follow 7.27 to determine if Annex PE applies. If Annex PE applies, CABs shall announce the scope extension by 25 March 2023.

CABs may apply the new UoA and UoC requirements earlier to fisheries that are certified or in assessment before 25 September 2020.

Review

The MSC welcomes comments on the FCP. Comments will be considered as part of the next review process. Reviews will take place at least every 5 years. Please submit comments to standards@msc.org.

More information about the MSC policy development process and MSC Standard Setting Procedure can be found on the MSC website (msc.org).

Introduction to this document

The MSC Fisheries Certification Process (FCP) v2.2 and the annexes define the process requirements for CABs to assess fisheries against the MSC Fisheries Standard.

The FCP consists of the assessment process (Sections 1-7) and process annexes (PA-PF).

Fisheries Certification Process

The purposes of the FCP are:

- To establish a defined process that enables all CABs to operate in a consistent and controlled manner.
- To provide transparency to maintain credibility with stakeholders.

MSC Guidance to the Fisheries Certification Process

Guidance is provided in the MSC Guidance to the Fisheries Certification Process (GFCP) to help CABs interpret the FCP. The GFCP is maintained as a separate document.

The headings and numbering in the GFCP, when included, match those in the FCP exactly, with numbers prefaced with the letter “G” to indicate guidance.

The MSC recommends that CABs read the FCP in conjunction with the GFCP. Text in the FCP is not repeated in the GFCP.

Where guidance is provided that generally relates to the subject of a section, or relates to the content of a specific clause, this icon  appears at the end of the section title or clause in the FCP, and if critical guidance is included, this icon  appears. These icons provide hyperlinks to the related guidance section in the GFCP.

 Critical guidance is identified within the GFCP using a sidebar, as illustrated in this paragraph.

Within the GFCP, this icon  provides a hyperlink back to the corresponding section or clause in the FCP.

MSC Interpretations Log

The MSC occasionally provides additional guidance to CABs and assessment teams via interpretations that are posted on a public Interpretations Log. Interpretations are provided in response to questions about requirements in the FCP (and the Fisheries Standard and General Certification Requirements). Interpretations help clarify the MSC’s intent and provide additional information and guidance to explain how a requirement should be interpreted and applied. They are not new requirements.

The MSC recommends that CABs and assessment teams check the Interpretations Log on a regular basis and follow relevant interpretations.

Auditability of the Guidance to the Fisheries Certification Process and interpretations

The guidance in the GFCP and interpretations are not directly auditable. The critical guidance identified in the GFCP should be followed by CABs where applicable. It is likely that this critical guidance would be referenced by the MSC-appointed accreditation body in any non-conformity with related FCP clauses.

The presence of critical guidance is identified with this icon  in the FCP and includes:

- **Special cases** relating to requirements that apply to a particular type of fishery, data or situation.
- **Additional clarification** on how a clause in the FCP would usually be expected to be implemented. The use of different methods would need to be justified.

Derogations

A derogation indicates a measure that allows for all or part of the requirement to be applied differently, or not at all, to certain applicants or certificate holders. Derogations are indicated by a footnote including:

- The authority who made the decision on the derogation.
- The date or meeting number of the decision.
- The date on which the derogation came into force or expires.
- A short description of the derogation.

Derogations are also issued via the MSC Interpretation Log. The MSC shall inform CABs when derogations are issued.

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MSC Fisheries Certification Process

1 Scope

The MSC Fisheries Certification Process (FCP) is for Conformity Assessment Body (CAB) use when assessing fisheries against the MSC Fisheries Standard.

2 Normative documents

The documents listed below contain provisions that, through reference in this text, become part of the FCP.

For documents listed, the latest effective version of the document applies.

The documents are:

- a. MSC Pre-Assessment Reporting Template.
- b. MSC Annual Pre-Assessment Reporting Template.
- c. MSC Fishery Announcement Template.
- d. MSC Client Document Checklist.
- e. MSC Use of the RBF in a Fishery Assessment Form.
- f. MSC Fishery Assessment Scoring Worksheet (including versions for enhanced bivalves and salmon).
- g. MSC RBF Worksheets.
- h. MSC Reporting Template (including versions for enhanced bivalves and salmon).
- i. Template for Peer Review of MSC Fishery Assessments.
- j. Template for Peer Reviewer follow up at PCDR stage.
- k. MSC Surveillance Announcement Template.
- l. MSC Surveillance Reporting Template.
- m. MSC Surveillance Review of Information Template.
- n. MSC Reduced Reassessment Reporting Template.
- o. MSC Database User Manual for CABs.
- p. MSC Variation Request Form – Fisheries.
- q. MSC Template for Stakeholder Input into Fishery Assessments.
- r. MSC Template for Stakeholder Input into Surveillance Audits.
- s. Certificate Holder Forced and Child Labour Policies, Practices and Measures Template.
- t. MSC IPI Announcement Template.

In addition, the normative documents listed in [MSC General Certification Requirements Section 2](#) also apply to implementation of the MSC Fisheries Certification Process.

3 Terms and definitions

All definitions are in the [MSC-MSCI Vocabulary](#).

Terms or phrases used in the FCP that have multiple definitions are defined within the text where such terms or phrases appear.

4 General requirements

4.1 Submission of reports, data and requests to the MSC

- 4.1.1 The CAB shall upload all information and data that are part of the fishery assessment and surveillance process to the MSC database.

4.2 Consultation requirements

- 4.2.1 The CAB shall hold stakeholder consultations so that the CAB becomes aware of all concerns of relevant stakeholders.
- 4.2.2 The CAB shall send a copy of a consultation announcement to stakeholders including a hyperlink to the 'MSC Template for Stakeholder Input into Fishery Assessments' no longer than 4 days after the start of each consultation period.
- 4.2.3 Within 10 days of receipt, the CAB shall acknowledge receipt of stakeholder input during the assessment process and inform the sender how and when the CAB will address their comments.
- 4.2.4 Where the Risk-Based Framework (RBF) is used to evaluate and score specified Performance Indicators (PIs), the CAB shall carry out stakeholder consultation to gather data to inform the scoring in conformity with the requirements set out in Annex PF.
- 4.2.5 Except where otherwise required, the CAB shall specify, in its consultation announcements, a deadline for the receipt of information or feedback from stakeholders of 17:00 UTC on the last day of the consultation period.

4.3 Use of confidential information in fisheries assessments

- 4.3.1 The CAB shall encourage stakeholders not to withhold information, including their concerns and knowledge about the fishery in question.
- 4.3.2 The CAB shall inform stakeholders that, unless covered by 4.3.3 below, any information that they cannot share with all stakeholders shall not be:
- a. Referenced in the assessment.
 - b. Used in determining the assessment outcome.
- 4.3.3 The CAB shall ensure that information kept confidential is restricted to:
- a. Financial transactions about certification.
 - b. The financial affairs of individual companies or information that may lead to this information being made public.
 - c. Information that is the subject of relevant national privacy or data protection legislation in the client's country.

4.4 Access to information

- 4.4.1 The CAB shall ensure that unpublished key information necessary for stakeholders to be able to properly review the logic used by the team to score a PI is made available to stakeholders.
- 4.4.1.1 The CAB shall make unpublished key information available when referenced in a public assessment report and shall ensure that the information is available throughout the subsequent stages of the assessment process.
 - 4.4.1.2 The CAB shall note that unpublished information does not include peer-reviewed or grey literature.

4.5 Confidentiality agreements

- 4.5.1 The owner of information specified under 4.3.3 may require stakeholders to sign confidentiality agreements before granting access to it. In these cases, the CAB shall:
- a. Require those requesting access to information to do so in writing.
 - b. Confirm signed confidentiality agreements are in place before permitting access to the confidential information.
- 4.5.2 The CAB may use the information specified under 4.3.3 in its assessment even if some or all stakeholders refuse to sign a confidentiality agreement.

5 Structural requirements

There are no requirements additional to ISO 17065 and [MSC General Certification Requirements](#).

6 Resource requirements

There are no requirements additional to ISO 17065 and [MSC General Certification Requirements](#).

7 Process requirements

7.1 Pre-assessment

- 7.1.1 The client may select a CAB to undertake an optional pre-assessment.
- 7.1.2 The CAB shall have objectives for the pre-assessment that include:
- a. Enabling CAB planning for a full assessment.
 - b. Informing the client of the likelihood of achieving certification.
 - c. Enabling client planning for the full assessment.
- 7.1.3 The CAB shall appoint an individual or team qualified in conformity with the requirements of Table PC2 and any 1 of the qualifications and competencies listed in Rows 1-5 of Table PC3 to conduct the pre-assessment evaluation.
- 7.1.4 The CAB shall ensure that any guidance given to clients during pre-assessment is in conformity with ISO 17065. 
- 7.1.5 The CAB shall include the following activities as part of the pre-assessment:
- a. An in-person or remote meeting with the client.
 - b. Decisions on potential field site visits, if required.
 - c. An assessment of the extent to which the fishery is consistent with the [MSC Fisheries Standard](#) (Annex SA, Annex SB, Annex SC and Annex SD).
 - d. An evaluation of the fishery's readiness for assessment.
 - e. A review of the availability of data.
 - i. If data are not thought to be available, the CAB shall indicate likely use of the RBF.
 - f. Defining the options for the scope of the full assessment consistent with Sections 7.4 and 7.5.
 - g. Describing potential obstacles or problems that may be a barrier to certification.
- 7.1.6 If the CAB conducts a pre-assessment, the CAB shall use the 'MSC Pre-Assessment Reporting Template' that is effective at the time of preparation.

- 7.1.6.1 The CAB shall inform the client that some sections of the 'MSC Pre-Assessment Reporting Template' are mandatory and some optional.
- 7.1.7 The CAB shall inform the client of the requirements for proceeding to a full assessment.
- 7.1.8 The CAB shall inform the client of:
- a. Communications that may need to take place with management agencies, conservation groups, post-harvest sectors, and relevant commercial and non-commercial fishing groups to explain the MSC assessment process and the implications (including costs and benefits) of certification.
 - b. The types and extent of data and information that the client will need to make available for a full assessment.
 - c. The location, timing and form of any announcements to be made during full assessment.
 - d. The optional MSC training information on the assessment process for clients.
- 7.1.9 The CAB shall treat the existence, process and outcomes of the pre-assessment as confidential to the client, the CAB and the MSC, unless otherwise directed by the client to make the pre-assessment more widely available.
- 7.1.10 The CAB shall provide the MSC with an annual report on the fishery pre-assessment reports they have provided to clients over the period 1 April to 31 March by the following 30 April.
- 7.1.10.1 Annual reports shall be sent to the MSC standards email (standards@msc.org) as an attachment using the 'Annual Pre-Assessment Reporting Template'.
 - 7.1.10.2 Where information relating to a specific MSC pre-assessment report has changed since a previous annual report submitted to the MSC, the CAB shall include an entry in the relevant section of the latest annual report providing the status of these fisheries.
 - 7.1.10.3 The first annual report submitted shall include data for all previous MSC pre-assessment reports provided to clients, irrespective of the year they were prepared.

7.2 Application for full assessment by client

- 7.2.1 On receipt of an application for full assessment, the CAB shall refer to ISO 17065 and the [MSC General Certification Requirements](#) for application review requirements.

7.3 Client Document Checklist

- 7.3.1 Before defining the Unit of Assessment and Unit of Certification, the CAB shall require the client to submit a completed Client Document Checklist.

7.4 Confirmation of scope

Confirming that the fishery is within scope of the MSC Fisheries Standard

- 7.4.1 The CAB shall withdraw the fishery at any point if it does not continue to meet scope requirements of 7.4.2.
- 7.4.2 The CAB shall verify that the fishery is eligible for certification through the following determinations:
- 7.4.2.1 The following taxa shall not be target species of the fishery under Principle 1:
 - a. Amphibians.

- b. Reptiles.
 - c. Birds.
 - d. Mammals.
- 7.4.2.2 The fishery shall not use poisons or explosives.

Controversial unilateral exemption to an international agreement

- 7.4.2.3 The fishery shall not be conducted under a controversial unilateral exemption to an international agreement.
- a. The CAB shall use these definitions to interpret this criterion:
 - i. “Controversial” means creating a controversy in the wider international community rather than simply between 2 states.
 - ii. “Unilateral” means arising from the action of a single state.
 - iii. “Exemption” means a refusal to join or abide by the rules of an international management body, or the taking of a reservation or exception to a measure adopted by such body, when in either such case the effect is to undermine the sustainable management of the fishery.
 - iv. “International agreements” are those with a direct mandate for sustainable management of the resources affected by the fishery according to the outcomes expressed by Principles 1 and 2.
 - b. When verifying fishery conformity with this criterion, the CAB shall take into consideration:
 - i. The relationship between international and coastal state jurisdictions recognised by relevant international agreements.
 - ii. Whether exemptions result in the implementation of a higher or lower level of conservation than are currently agreed by an international management body.
 - iii. Whether the sustainable management of the fishery is undermined.

Conviction for forced or child labour

- 7.4.2.4 The CAB shall confirm that the client or client group does not include an entity that has been convicted for a forced or child labour violation in the last 2 years. ■
- a. If an entity that belongs to a certified client group is convicted for a violation of law on forced or child labour, the CAB shall consider the entity as having become out of scope and shall withdraw it from the certificate or client group.
 - b. If a conviction is determined, the CAB shall consider the entity as out of scope until 2 years have passed since the date of the conviction.

Submission of forced and child labour policies statement

- 7.4.2.5 The client or client group shall use the ‘Certificate Holder Forced and Child Labour Policies, Practices and Measures Template’ to detail the policies, practices and measures in place to ensure the absence of forced and child labour.
- 7.4.2.6 The client or client group shall submit the completed ‘Certificate Holder Forced and Child Labour Policies, Practices and Measures Template’ to the CAB at the same time as it submits the Client Document Checklist.
- 7.4.2.7 The CAB shall confirm that all sections of the ‘Certificate Holder Forced and Child Labour Policies, Practices and Measures Template’ are completed.
- 7.4.2.8 The CAB shall confirm that the ‘Certificate Holder Forced and Child Labour Policies, Practices and Measures Template’ covers all entities within the Unit of Certification. ■

- 7.4.2.9 The CAB shall upload the ‘Certificate Holder Forced and Child Labour Policies, Practices and Measures Template’, as completed by the client or client group, to the MSC database for publication on the MSC website at the same time as the Public Certification Report.

Conviction for shark finning

- 7.4.2.10 The CAB shall confirm that the client or client group does not include an entity that has been convicted for a shark finning violation in the last 2 years. ■
- a. If an entity that belongs to a certified client group is convicted for a violation of law with respect to shark finning, the CAB shall consider the entity as having become out of scope and shall withdraw it from the certificate or client group.
 - b. If a conviction is determined, the CAB shall consider the entity as out of scope until 2 years have passed since the date of the conviction.

Controversy – disputes in fisheries

- 7.4.2.11 A fishery shall not be eligible for certification if there is no mechanism for resolving disputes, or if the disputes overwhelm the fishery. ■
- a. If a fishery applying for certification is the subject of controversy and/or dispute at any time during the assessment process or certification cycle, the CAB shall consider:
 - i. Whether the fisheries management regime (national or international system or plan) includes a mechanism for resolving disputes.
 - ii. If there is a mechanism for resolving disputes, whether that mechanism is adequate to deal with potential or existing disputes (e.g. do stakeholders have access to the mechanism for resolving disputes and is there sufficient scope to cover the relevant issues).
 - iii. Whether disputes overwhelm the fishery enough to prevent it from meeting the [MSC Fisheries Standard](#).
 - b. The CAB shall decline the application where it judges 7.4.2.11 applies.

Enhanced fisheries

- 7.4.2.12 Using the criteria in Table 1, the CAB shall determine whether the fishery is an eligible enhanced fishery. ■
- a. An enhanced fishery shall only be eligible for assessment if it conforms to all of the scope criteria.

Table 1: Scope criteria for eligible enhanced fisheries

A	Linkages to and maintenance of a wild stock
i	At some point in the production process, the system relies upon the capture of fish from the wild environment . Such fish may be taken at any stage of the life cycle including eggs, larvae, juveniles or adults. The “wild environment” in this context includes marine, freshwater and any other aquatic ecosystems.
ii	The species are native to the geographic region of the fishery and the natural production areas from which the fishery’s catch originates.
iii	There are natural reproductive components of the stock from which the fishery’s catch originates that maintain themselves without having to be restocked every year.

iv	<p>Where fish stocking is used in hatch-and-catch (HAC) systems, such stocking does not form a major part of a current rebuilding plan for depleted stocks.</p> <p>Note: This requirement shall apply to the current status of the fishery. Wild stocks shall be managed by other conventional means. If rebuilding has been done by stocking in the past, it shall not result in an out-of-scope determination as long as other measures are now in place.</p>
B	Feeding and husbandry
i	<p>The production system operates without substantial augmentation of food supply. In HAC systems, any feeding is used only to grow the animals to a small size prior to release (not more than 10% of the average adult maximum weight), such that most of the total growth (not less than 90%) is achieved during the wild phase. In catch-and-grow (CAG) systems, feeding during the captive phase is only by natural means (e.g. filter feeding in mussels), or at a level and duration that provide only for the maintenance of condition (e.g. crustaceans in holding tanks) rather than to achieve growth.</p>
ii	<p>In CAG systems, production during the captive phase does not routinely require disease prevention involving chemicals or compounds with medicinal prophylactic properties.</p>
C	Habitat and ecosystem impacts
i	<p>Any modifications to the habitat of the stock are reversible and do not cause serious or irreversible harm to the natural ecosystem's structure and function.</p> <p>Note: Habitat modifications that are not reversible, are already in place and are not created specifically for the fishery shall be in scope. This includes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Large-scale artificial reefs. • Structures associated with enhancement activities that do not cause irreversible harm to the natural ecosystem inhabited by the stock, such as salmon fry farms next to river systems.

Introduced Species Based Fisheries (ISBF)

- 7.4.2.13 The CAB shall only accept an application for certification from a fishery targeting an introduced species if it meets the scope criteria contained in Table 2.
- If the fishery is based upon an introduced species, the CAB shall follow the necessary steps in the [MSC Fisheries Standard Annex SD](#).
 - The CAB shall inform clients that the requirements for ISBF are part of a pilot program and may be subject to change.

Table 2: Provisional scope criteria for ISBF

A	Irreversibility of the introduction in the new location
i	The introduced species has a large population size (comparable to or larger than the population sizes of other native species occupying similar ecological niches in the new location).
ii	The species has spread to a range beyond that of its initial introduction in the new location.
iii	There is evidence to demonstrate that the species cannot be eradicated from the location by known mechanisms without serious ecological, economic and/or social consequences.
B	History of the introduction

i	The species was introduced to the new location prior to 1993; this being the year that the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD), which includes provisions on introduced species, was ratified.
ii	If the introduction occurred after the CBD was ratified, such fisheries shall only potentially be in scope if the introduction was non-deliberate and occurred at least 20 years prior to the date the application is made for assessment against the MSC Fisheries Standard.
C	No further introductions
i	There is no continuing introduction of the introduced species being considered for certification to the location (i.e. the species is now entirely self-sustaining in its new location).

7.5 Scope of assessment: defining the Unit of Assessment and Unit of Certification !!

- 7.5.1 After receiving an application for full assessment and a completed Client Document Checklist, the CAB shall use all available information and pre-assessment reports about the fishery to determine the Unit of Assessment (UoA).
- 7.5.2 The CAB shall determine the proposed UoA (i.e. what is to be assessed) to include: ■
- a. The target stock(s).
 - b. The fishing gear type(s) and, if relevant, vessel type(s). !!
 - c. The fishing fleets or groups of vessels, or individual fishing operators pursuing that stock, including any other eligible fishers that are outside the proposed Unit of Certification (UoC).
- 7.5.3 The CAB shall determine the proposed UoC (i.e. what is to be covered by the certificate) to include: ■
- a. The target stock(s).
 - b. The fishing gear type(s) and, if relevant, vessel type(s).
 - c. The fishing fleets or groups of vessels or individual fishing operators pursuing that stock including entities initially intended to be covered by the certificate.
- 7.5.4 The CAB shall not define the UoA and UoC based on the species caught as determined at the time of fishing, where the objective is simply to exclude certain hauls from the assessment. ■
- 7.5.5 The CAB shall not change the UoA and UoC during the assessment unless the UoA is announced provisionally in the initial announcement and confirmed later in conformity with 7.17.3. ■
- 7.5.6 The CAB shall define the geographical area in which the UoA and UoC operate. ■

Traceability factors

- 7.5.7 The CAB shall undertake an initial review of key traceability factors and shall document whether any of the following risks are applicable: ■
- a. The possibility of non-certified gears being used within the UoC.
 - b. The possibility of vessels from the UoC fishing outside the UoC or in different geographical areas (on the same trips or different trips).
 - c. The possibility of vessels from outside the UoC or client group fishing the same stock.
 - d. Any other risks of substitution between fish from the UoC and fish from outside this unit.

- 7.5.7.1 The CAB shall include the traceability risks identified during the initial review in the traceability section in the Announcement Comment Draft Report.
- 7.5.7.2 The CAB shall inform the client of its obligations to meet traceability requirements before it sells fish or fish products from the UoC as MSC certified or under assessment, including that: ■
- a. Systems are in place to ensure that fish and fish products from the UoC are traceable back to the UoC.
 - b. Systems are in place to ensure that fish and fish products from the UoC are segregated from fish or fish products not included in the UoC.

Other eligible fishers and entities and certificate sharing

- 7.5.8 The CAB shall determine whether there are other eligible fishers or other entities that may share the certificate as new client group members. ■
- 7.5.8.1 Fishers or other entities that are not identified as part of the UoA or as part of the client group membership shall not be eligible to gain access to the certification later, unless they conform to the requirements of 7.27.
- 7.5.8.2 If there are other eligible fishers or other potential client group members within the UoA, the CAB shall require the client to:
- a. Prepare a statement for the CAB to upload to the MSC database for publication on the MSC website of the client's understanding and willingness for reasonable certificate sharing arrangements within the MSC Fishery Announcement.
 - b. Inform other eligible fishers and/or other entities of the public statement and of the opportunity to share the certificate during relevant interactions with the eligible fishers and other entities as is practicable.

Inseparable or practicably inseparable catches

- 7.5.9 The CAB shall determine whether there are catches of non-target (Principle 2) stock(s) that are inseparable or practicably inseparable (IPI) from target (Principle 1) stock(s). ■
- 7.5.9.1 The CAB shall only recognise stock(s) as being an IPI stock where the inseparability arises because either:
- a. The non-target catch is practicably indistinguishable during normal fishing operations (i.e. the catch is from a stock of the same species or a closely related species), or
 - b. When distinguishable, it is not commercially feasible to separate due to the practical operation of the fishery that would require significant modification to existing harvesting and processing methods.
- And:
- c. The total combined proportion of catches from the IPI stock(s) do not exceed 15% by weight of the total combined catches of target and IPI stock(s) for the UoA.
 - d. The IPI stock(s) are not endangered, threatened or protected (ETP) species.
 - e. The IPI stock(s) are not certified separately.
- 7.5.10 The CAB shall apply Annex PA where there are IPI stock(s) within the scope of the assessment.
- 7.5.11 If IPI stock(s) are identified as per 7.5.9.1, the CAB shall upload an announcement to the MSC database for publication on the MSC website, using the 'MSC IPI Announcement Template', to inform stakeholders and the MSC of the identification of IPI stock(s).
- 7.5.12 In the 'MSC IPI Announcement Template', the CAB shall follow either 7.5.12.1 or 7.5.12.2 below.

- 7.5.12.1 Confirm that fish or fish products considered as coming from IPI stock(s) may enter into chains of custody subject to Annex PA.
- a. The CAB shall include a detailed and substantiated justification for how the catches under consideration fulfil the requirements of 7.5.9.1 above.
- 7.5.12.2 Confirm that fish or fish products considered as coming from IPI stock(s) may enter chains of custody, with an exemption to the additional assessment requirements for IPI stock(s) given in PA1.4.2.
- a. The CAB shall include a detailed and substantiated justification showing that:
 - i. The catches under consideration fulfil the requirements of 7.5.9.1 above.
 - ii. The catch proportion of IPI stock(s) calculated in 7.5.9.1.c is less than or equal to 2%, and the total catch of IPI stock(s) by the UoA does not create a significant impact on the IPI stock(s) as a whole.
 - iii. The CAB shall note that significant impact will be assessed on the basis of the status of the IPI stock(s), and the risk that the IPI catch poses to the health of the IPI stock(s).
- 7.5.13 The CAB shall upload the IPI announcement as early as practicable in the assessment process, and no later than the date of issue of the Client and Peer Review Draft Report to the client and to the Peer Review College.
- 7.5.14 The CAB shall use the evaluation against the requirements specified in 7.5.9–7.5.12 above to determine the eligibility of catches of IPI stock(s) to enter further certified chains of custody.

7.6 Team selection

- 7.6.1 The CAB shall form an assessment team (hereafter “team”) for a fishery assessment, comprising a team leader and a minimum of 1 additional team member, that meets the qualifications and competency requirements specified in Table PC1, Table PC2 and Table PC3 and in line with the requirements in the [General Certification Requirements \(GCR\)](#).
- a. If the team will use the RBF, as determined by reference to Table 3, at least 1 team member shall have received MSC training in the use of the RBF as detailed in Table PC3.
- 7.6.2 If events outside the CAB’s control mean that team membership must change during an assessment, the CAB shall announce the new team members to stakeholders.

7.7 Preparing for the Announcement Comment Draft Report

Fishery with enhanced stock

- 7.7.1 If the scope of the fishery contains an enhanced fishery that is not covered in the MSC Fisheries Standard [Annex SB](#) and [Annex SC](#): 
- 7.7.1.1 The CAB shall review and, if necessary, modify the default assessment tree, taking into account the PIs required to assess the enhancements to achieve, at a minimum, the same level of sustainability performance as the default assessment tree.
 - 7.7.1.2 The CAB shall assess:
 - a. Enhancement activities against the impacts on the natural reproductive component of the associated wild stock.
 - b. The extent of translocation against: 
 - i. The effect on the natural genetic characteristics of the stock.
 - ii. The environmental impacts of translocation.

- c. Environmental modification activities under the Principle 2 assessment for their impacts on other species or the wild environment. The CAB shall consider environmental impacts, including:
 - i. Feed augmentation. !!
 - ii. The use of medicines or other chemical compounds.
 - iii. Fertilisation to enhance natural food availability.
 - iv. Removal of predators or competitors.
 - d. The impacts of habitat modification under the habitats and ecosystems components in Principle 2. The CAB shall consider environmental impacts including: ■
 - i. Whether serious or irreversible harm may be caused to the natural ecosystem's structure and function, including the natural food chains of predator and/or prey species.
 - ii. The types and extent of habitat modifications and the possibility of these causing serious or irreversible harm.
- 7.7.1.3 The CAB shall note that:
- a. The CAB shall consult with other CABs developing modified assessment trees for similar fisheries.
 - b. In cases where the CAB's proposed modifications to the default assessment tree for an enhanced fishery are later found by the MSC to produce a determination and/or conditions that do not conform to MSC requirements:
 - i. The CAB shall review and, if necessary, revise its assessment and scoring to conform to the default assessment tree.
 - ii. The timing of the review and revisions shall be at the discretion of the MSC and may include a requirement for an expedited audit.
 - iii. The process shall be sufficient to ensure the continued validity of the determination taking account of the FCP.
- 7.7.1.4 If the CAB decides that the default assessment tree requires modification, the CAB shall follow 7.12.5.

Harmonisation of overlapping fisheries

- 7.7.2 The CAB shall determine whether any proposed UoAs overlap with any certified or in-assessment fisheries.
- 7.7.2.1 Where proposed UoAs overlap, the CAB shall follow the steps for harmonisation in Annex PB.

Use of risk-based methods for a data-deficient fishery

- 7.7.3 The CAB shall use the criteria in Table 3 to decide whether a fishery may or may not be data-deficient with respect to 1 or more scoring element(s) within a PI. !!
- 7.7.3.1 A PI may contain both data-deficient and non-data-deficient scoring elements.
- 7.7.3.2 The CAB shall use the criteria in Table 3 to decide whether a scoring element may or may not be data-deficient.
- 7.7.3.3 The criteria in Table 3 shall be applied to all known scoring elements in Principle 1 and Principle 2. ■

- 7.7.3.4 Uncertainties in the stock definition or stock assessment models shall not be used as a justification for using Annex PF in cases where some form of indicators and reference points are available for the fishery. ■
- 7.7.3.5 If the decision is made that a fishery is data-deficient with respect to 1 or more PIs, the team shall use Annex PF for the assessment of those data-deficient PIs.
- 7.7.3.6 If a PI contains both data-deficient and non-data-deficient scoring elements, the CAB shall:
- a. Use Annex PF to assess data-deficient scoring elements.
 - b. Score non-data-deficient scoring elements using the tree announced in the assessment.

Table 3: Criteria for triggering the use of the RBF

Performance Indicator	Criteria	Consideration	Notes
1.1.1 Stock status	Stock status reference points are available, derived either from analytical stock assessment or using empirical approaches.	Yes	Use default Performance Indicator Scoring Guideposts within default assessment tree for this PI.
		No	Use Annex PF (RBF) for this PI.
2.1.1 Primary species outcome and 2.2.1 Secondary species outcome	Biologically based limits are available, derived either from analytical stock assessment or using empirical approaches.	Yes	Use default Performance Indicator Scoring Guideposts within default assessment tree for this PI.
		No	Use Annex PF (RBF) for this PI.
2.3.1 ETP species outcome	Can the impact of the fishery in assessment on ETP species be analytically determined?	Yes	Use default Performance Indicator Scoring Guideposts within default assessment tree for this PI.
		No	Use Annex PF (RBF) for this PI.
2.4.1 Habitats outcome	In line with the MSC Fisheries Standard habitats guidance (GSA3.13.1.1), are both of the following applicable? 1. Information on habitats encountered is available. 2. Information on impact of fishery on habitats encountered is available.	Yes	Use default Performance Indicator Scoring Guideposts within default assessment tree for this PI.
		No	Use Annex PF (RBF) for this PI.
	Is information available to support an analysis of the	Yes	Use default Performance Indicator Scoring

Performance Indicator	Criteria	Consideration	Notes
2.5.1 Ecosystem outcome	impact of the fishery on the ecosystem?		Guideposts within default assessment tree for this PI.
		No	Use Annex PF (RBF) for this PI.

7.8 Determination of eligibility date

7.8.1 The CAB shall nominate a date from which product from a certified fishery is eligible to be sold as MSC certified or bear the MSC ecolabel (the eligibility date).

7.8.1.1 The date shall be any nominated date on or between the publication date of the first Public Comment Draft Report and the certification date. 

7.8.2 If the eligibility date is set before the certification date, the CAB shall inform the fishery that any fish harvested after the eligibility date and sold or stored as under-assessment fish shall be handled in conformity with the following requirements:

- a. All under-assessment products shall be clearly identified and segregated from certified and non-certified products.
- b. The client shall maintain full traceability records for all under-assessment product, demonstrating traceability back to the UoC and including the date of harvest.
- c. Under-assessment products shall not be sold as certified or labelled with the MSC ecolabel, logo, or trademarks until fishery certification and product eligibility are confirmed.

7.9 Determination of the traceability systems and point(s) at which fish and fish products enter further certified Chains of Custody

7.9.1 The CAB shall determine whether the fishery client has sufficient systems of tracking and tracing to ensure all fish and fish products identified and sold as certified by the fishery client originate from an appropriate UoC. 

7.9.1.1 The CAB shall confirm that systems allow the fishery client to trace back to the UoC any fish or fish products sold as MSC certified.

7.9.1.2 The CAB shall confirm that the fishery client maintains appropriate records to demonstrate the traceability back to their UoCs of certified fish or fish products. 

7.9.1.3 The CAB shall document any of the risk factors outlined in the Announcement Comment Draft Report, identifying any areas of risk for the integrity of certified products and how they are managed and mitigated. 

7.9.1.4 For each risk factor identified in 7.9.1.3, the CAB shall describe the risk present and details of the mitigation or management of risk. 

7.9.1.5 The CAB shall identify and document in the Announcement Comment Draft Report: 

- a. The UoC.
- b. The point of intended change of ownership of product.
- c. The point from which subsequent Chain of Custody certification is required.

7.9.1.6 Where there are IPI stock(s) within the scope of certification, teams shall follow Annex PA and report on the verification of the traceability systems including:

- a. An evaluation of the species, stock, proportion and weight of the catch of IPI stock(s) and their eligibility to enter further certified chains of custody, as per Annex PA.
- 7.9.2 If the CAB makes a positive determination under 7.9.1, fish and fish products from the UoC may enter into certified chains of custody and be eligible to be sold as MSC certified or carry the MSC ecolabel.
- 7.9.2.1 The CAB shall determine and document the scope of the fishery certificate, including the parties and categories of parties eligible to use the certificate and the point(s) at which Chain of Custody is needed, as follows:
- a. Chain of Custody certification shall always be required following first change of ownership to any party not covered by the fishery certificate.
 - b. Chain of Custody certification may be required at an earlier stage than change of ownership if the team determines that the systems within the fishery are not sufficient to make sure all fish and fish products identified as such by the fishery originate from the UoC.
- 7.9.3 If the CAB makes a negative determination under 7.9.1, the CAB shall state in its reports that fish and fish products from the UoC are not eligible to be sold as MSC certified or carry the MSC ecolabel.
- 7.9.3.1 This determination shall remain in force until revised by the CAB in a subsequent assessment.
- 7.9.4 The CAB shall inform the UoC that if they sell or label non-eligible (non-conforming) product as MSC certified, they must: ■
- a. Inform any affected customers and the CAB of the issue within 4 days of detection.
 - b. Immediately cease to sell any non-conforming products in stock as MSC certified until their certified status has been verified by the CAB.
 - c. Cooperate with the CAB to determine the cause of the issue and to implement any corrective actions required.

7.10 Announcement Comment Draft Report ■

- 7.10.1 The team shall prepare and complete an Announcement Comment Draft Report using, but not limited to, the information provided in the Client Document Checklist. ■
- 7.10.1.1 The team may use any outputs of the optional pre-assessment stage and previous Fisheries Improvement Projects, if completed.
- 7.10.2 The team shall include the following in the Announcement Comment Draft Report:
- a. Confirmation that the fishery is in scope.
 - b. Confirmation of the assessment tree used to assess the fishery.
 - c. The proposed UoA(s).
 - d. The proposed UoC(s).
 - e. Draft scoring ranges (<60, 60-79, ≥80) for each PI. ❗
 - f. A draft rationale for each PI and Scoring Issue (SI).
 - g. A reference list for each PI.
 - h. An indication of the availability of information used to score each PI, highlighting potential information gaps.
 - i. A review of traceability risks and systems used in the UoA(s) and plan to review traceability systems at the site visit, if necessary.

- j. If the fishery is enhanced and is found to be within scope, an assessment of each enhancement activity undertaken by the fishery and a documented justification for the determination that the fishery is within scope.
 - k. Identification and justification of IPI stock(s).
 - l. Summary of key issues for further investigation.
 - m. A plan for RBF activities that the team will undertake at the site visit (Annex PF).
- 7.10.3 The team shall use the structure and the default set of Performance Indicator Scoring Guideposts in the default assessment tree as set out in the MSC Fisheries Standard ([Annex SA](#)) in all assessments, with the following exceptions.
- 7.10.3.1 For enhanced bivalve fisheries, the team shall score the fishery according to the requirements set out in the enhanced bivalve default tree (the MSC Fisheries Standard [Annex SB](#)).
 - 7.10.3.2 For salmon fisheries, the team shall score the fishery according to the requirements set out in the salmon default assessment tree (the MSC Fisheries Standard [Annex SC](#)).
 - 7.10.3.3 For introduced species based fisheries, the team shall score the fishery according to the requirements set out in the introduced species based fisheries annex (the MSC Fisheries Standard [Annex SD](#)).
 - 7.10.3.4 If the fishery is an enhanced fishery for a species other than bivalves or salmon, the CAB shall apply 7.7.1.
 - 7.10.3.5 If the CAB judges that the default assessment trees provided are inappropriate for the fishery and require modification, the CAB shall follow 7.12.5.
- 7.10.4 The CAB shall use the 'MSC Reporting Template' to create the Announcement Comment Draft Report.

7.11 Decision to proceed to announcement by client

- 7.11.1 The CAB shall provide the Announcement Comment Draft Report to the client.
- 7.11.2 The CAB shall ensure that any information given to clients during the Announcement Comment Draft Report stage is in conformity with ISO 17065.
- 7.11.3 The CAB shall give the client an opportunity to question the team and have an issue re-examined if the client has a concern that insufficient information is available to support the team's decisions or that a decision has been made in error.
 - 7.11.3.1 The CAB shall require the client to provide objective evidence in support of any additional claims or any claimed errors of fact.
 - 7.11.3.2 The team may accept client requests for changes in the report but shall provide justifications for changes and responses made to client comments.
- 7.11.4 The client shall inform the CAB of their decision to either proceed to announcement of assessment or defer announcement of assessment.

7.12 Announcement of fishery assessment

- 7.12.1 The CAB shall formally announce the fishery assessment by completing and uploading the 'MSC Fishery Announcement Template' and Announcement Comment Draft Report to the MSC database for publication on the MSC website.
 - 7.12.1.1 The CAB shall follow the timeline for stakeholder input as detailed in 7.15.1.
- 7.12.2 The CAB shall include the following information in the 'MSC Fishery Announcement Template':
 - a. Confirmation that the fishery is within scope of the MSC Fisheries Standard.

- b. The statement on certificate sharing described in 7.5.8.2.a, if applicable.
 - c. Summaries of CVs of the team and team leader, including an explanation of how they meet the competency criteria in the [GCR](#) and Annex PC, as well as confirmation that the team has no conflicts of interest in relation to the fishery under assessment.
 - d. The choice of assessment tree to be used to score the fishery.
 - e. Details of the opportunities and input methods for stakeholders to participate during the assessment process.
 - i. The details for the site visit should make clear that all members of the team are available to meet with stakeholders in person or remotely.
 - f. Details of the stakeholder input period on the Announcement Comment Draft Report.
 - g. The hyperlink to the 'MSC Template for Stakeholder Input into Fishery Assessments'.
- 7.12.3 The announcement of the fishery assessment shall include the announcement of the site visit, including the date and location of the site visit.
- 7.12.3.1 The CAB shall organise the site visit to commence after the stakeholder input on the Announcement Comment Draft Report, as detailed in 7.15. !!
 - 7.12.3.2 The announcement shall contain an invitation for stakeholder participation in the assessment process.
 - 7.12.3.3 The CAB shall ensure that stakeholders identified in the Pre-Assessment Report and/or Announcement Comment Draft Report are invited to participate in the assessment process.
 - 7.12.3.4 Where the CAB proposes to use the RBF, the CAB shall follow PF2.1 and PF2.3.
- 7.12.4 At the same time as uploading the documents required in 7.12.1-7.12.3 to the MSC database for publication on the MSC website, the CAB shall upload the following documents to the MSC database:
- a. A copy of the Client Document Checklist.
 - b. A copy of any Pre-Assessment Report(s) it has written for the fishery. ■
 - i. If the CAB is aware of any other pre-assessment report(s) written by other parties, it shall inform the MSC of the report's author.

Modified assessment trees

- 7.12.5 If the CAB decides that any of the assessment trees need modification, the CAB shall: !!
- a. Apply for and obtain a variation from the MSC to 7.10.3 before preparing the Announcement Comment Draft Report.
 - b. At the time of formally announcing the fishery assessment, inform stakeholders in the 'MSC Fishery Announcement Template' about the draft assessment tree and the reasons for modifications.
 - c. Announce the site visit following 7.12.3.
 - d. Upload the draft assessment tree to the MSC database for publication on the MSC website.
 - e. Allow stakeholder input on the draft modified assessment tree and weighting during the same stakeholder input period on the Announcement Comment Draft Report.
 - f. Consider all stakeholder input, recording why comments have been accepted or rejected.
 - g. Review the decision to modify the assessment tree considering stakeholder input.
 - h. Upload the final assessment tree to be used within 10 days of the consultation period closing to the MSC database for publication on the MSC website.

- i. Include the changes to the assessment tree in the subsequent fishery assessment reports.

7.13 Assessment timelines

- 7.13.1 The CAB's indicative assessment timeline, submitted to the MSC database with the fishery assessment announcement, shall form the basis for tracking the assessment process by stakeholders.
 - 7.13.1.1 If the CAB determines that the publication date of the next public report will be equal to or more than 30 days before or after the date stated in the indicative timeline, the CAB shall upload a revised timeline to the MSC database for publication on the MSC website.

7.14 Peer Review College

- 7.14.1 Upon announcement of the fishery, the CAB shall send the Peer Review College a notification that the announcement of the fishery entering assessment and the assessment timeline have been published on the MSC website.
 - 7.14.1.1 The CAB shall confirm the anticipated date that the Client and Peer Review Draft Report will become available.
 - 7.14.1.2 The CAB shall inform the Peer Review College when changes are made to the assessment timeline that will affect the peer review process.
- 7.14.2 The CAB shall obtain from the Peer Review College:
 - a. The names of the peer reviewers who are proposed to carry out the peer review and details of their qualifications and competencies.
 - b. Confirmation that the peer reviewers meet the required competencies.
 - c. Confirmation of the availability of the peer reviewers within the timeline nominated by the CAB.
- 7.14.3 Following the site visit, the CAB shall either:
 - a. Provide the Peer Review College with the contact details of all the stakeholders to enable the College to undertake the stakeholder consultation on potential conflicts of interest of the peer reviewers proposed, or
 - b. Request their stakeholders to inform the Peer Review College regarding any potential conflicts of interest of the peer reviewers proposed, using the consultation form provided by the Peer Review College.
- 7.14.4 The CAB shall obtain from the Peer Review College confirmation that the peer reviewers have no conflicts of interest in relation to the fishery under assessment.
- 7.14.5 The Peer Review College's decision on the choice of peer reviewers is final.
- 7.14.6 The CAB shall present the information in 7.14.2.a and 7.14.2.b in the Public Comment Draft Report and subsequent reports.

7.15 Stakeholder input on the Announcement Comment Draft Report

- 7.15.1 The CAB shall publish the Announcement Comment Draft Report for stakeholder input.
 - 7.15.1.1 If an initial assessment, the CAB shall allow 60 days for stakeholder input.
 - 7.15.1.2 If a reassessment, the CAB shall allow 30 days for stakeholder input.
- 7.15.2 The CAB shall provide the hyperlink to the 'MSC Template for Stakeholder Input into Fishery Assessments'.

- 7.15.3 The CAB shall only accept stakeholder input as public record if submitted using the 'MSC Template for Stakeholder Input into Fishery Assessments', or if raised at the site visit in person or remotely.
- 7.15.3.1 Stakeholders may raise issues with the team in confidence for the team to consider at the site visit, but any confidential information cannot be used in scoring unless in compliance with confidentiality requirements, see Section 4.3.
- 7.15.4 The CAB shall inform stakeholders that they must provide objective evidence and references in support of any claims or any claimed errors of fact.
- 7.15.5 The CAB shall upload all written stakeholder input received from the stakeholder consultation on the Announcement Comment Draft Report to the MSC database for publication on the MSC website before the commencement of the site visit, and inform stakeholders that this has been completed. ■

7.16 Site visits, stakeholder input and information collection ■

- 7.16.1 The team shall carry out the site visit as planned. ■
- 7.16.2 The team shall:
- a. Conduct interviews to make sure that the team is aware of any concerns or information that participants may have.
 - b. Allow private interviews with the team for participants who request one.
 - c. Use any information provided in private in conformity with confidentiality requirements, see Section 4.3.

7.17 Scoring the fishery ■

- 7.17.1 After the team has compiled and analysed all relevant information (including technical, written and anecdotal sources), the team shall score the UoA(s) against the Performance Indicator Scoring Guideposts in the final tree. ■
- 7.17.1.1 The team shall only use information that was available (in accordance with sections 4.3, 4.4 and 4.5) on or before the last day of the site visit.
- a. If the CAB and any participant at the site visit agree in writing that information will be made available after the site visit, the CAB shall accept this information up to 30 days after the last day of the site visit.
- 7.17.2 The team shall: ■
- a. Discuss evidence together.
 - b. Weigh up the balance of evidence.
 - c. Use their judgement to agree a final score following the processes below.
- 7.17.3 Following the site visit, changes to the target stock(s) listed for assessment under Principle 1 may be made.
- 7.17.3.1 The team shall assess any stock or species initially proposed for assessment under Principle 1 that will no longer be assessed under Principle 1, instead against the relevant Principle 2 PIs.
- 7.17.3.2 The team shall not assess any stock or species not originally proposed for assessment under Principle 1.
- 7.17.4 The requirements in the Scoring Guideposts (SGs) shall be regarded as follows:
- a. In order to achieve an 80 score, all the 60 SGs and all the 80 SGs shall be met, and each scoring issue shall be justified by supporting rationale.
 - b. In order to achieve a 100 score, all the 60 SGs, all the 80 SGs, and all of the 100 SGs shall be met, and each scoring issue shall be justified by supporting rationale.

- 7.17.5 The team should assign scores for individual PIs in increments of 5 points.
- 7.17.5.1 If scores are assigned in divisions of less than 5 points, the team shall justify the reason for this in the report. ■
- 7.17.5.2 The team shall apply an exception if the score is automated from the RBF worksheet and include the worksheet score without rounding up or down.
- 7.17.6 The team shall report scores for each of the 3 Principles to the nearest 1 decimal place.
- 7.17.7 The team shall score individual PIs.
- 7.17.7.1 Any UoA for which 1 or more required PIs is not scored shall not be awarded certification.
- 7.17.7.2 The team shall assess the PI against each of the scoring issues at the SG60 level.
- a. If 1 or more of the SG60 scoring issues is not met, the UoA fails, and no further scoring is required for the PI.
- i. Teams shall not assign a numeric score of less than 60 for a PI, but they shall record in narrative form their rationale for determining that the PI is scoring less than 60.
- 7.17.7.3 If all the SG60 scoring issues are met, the PI must achieve at least a 60 score, and the team shall assess each of the scoring issues at the SG80 level. !!
- a. If not all the SG80 scoring issues are met, the PI shall be given an intermediate score (65, 70 or 75) reflecting overall performance against the different SG80 scoring issues:
- i. Award 70 where performance against the scoring issues is mid-way between SG60 and SG80 (some scoring issues are fully met, and some are not fully met).
- ii. Award 75 when performance against the scoring issues is almost at SG80 (most scoring issues are fully met, but a few are not fully met).
- iii. Award 65 when performance against the scoring issues is slightly above SG60 (a few scoring issues are fully met, but most are not fully met).
- b. If 1 or more of the SG80 scoring issues is not met, the PI shall be assigned a condition (or conditions).
- 7.17.7.4 If all the SG80 scoring issues are met, the PI must achieve at least an 80 score, and the team shall assess each of the scoring issues at the SG100 level.
- a. If not all the SG100 scoring issues are met, the PI shall be given an intermediate score (85, 90 or 95) reflecting overall performance against the different SG100 scoring issues.
- i. Award 90 where performance against the scoring issues is mid-way between SG80 and SG100 (some scoring issues are fully met, and some are not fully met).
- ii. Award 95 when performance against the scoring issues is almost at SG100 (most scoring issues are fully met, but a few are not fully met).
- iii. Award 85 when performance against the scoring issues is slightly above SG80 (a few scoring issues are fully met, but most are not fully met).
- 7.17.7.5 If all the SG100 scoring issues are met, the PI shall be given a 100 score.
- 7.17.8 The team shall use the default weighting in the 'MSC Fishery Assessment Scoring Worksheet' when scoring the default assessment tree. ■
- 7.17.8.1 Where necessary, the team shall make changes to the default weighting when they propose modifications to the default assessment tree.
- a. Weights in each level of the final tree (i.e. Principle, component or PI) shall add up to a total of 1.

- b. Teams shall give equal weighting to each PI within a component of the tree, and to each component within a Principle of the tree.
- 7.17.9 To contribute to the scoring of any PI, the team shall verify that each scoring issue is fully and unambiguously met.
- 7.17.9.1 A rationale shall be presented to support the team’s conclusion. ■
 - 7.17.9.2 The rationale shall make direct reference to every scoring issue and whether or not it is fully met at each SG level.
 - 7.17.9.3 An exception to 7.17.9.2 is permitted only for those PIs that include only a single scoring issue at each SG level.
 - a. For these PIs, it is permitted to partially score the issue to obtain intermediate scores.
 - b. A rationale shall be provided, clearly explaining which aspects of the scoring issue are met.
- 7.17.10 If multiple scoring elements are included in Principle 1 or 2 PIs, the team shall score the PI as follows:
- a. If any single scoring element fails to meet SG80, the overall score for that PI shall be less than 80 so that a condition is raised, regardless of the situation with regard to other scoring elements, some of which may be at the SG100 level. !!
 - b. The score given shall reflect the number of scoring elements that fail and the level of their failure, rather than being derived directly as a numerical average of the individual scores for all scoring elements.
 - c. Scores should be determined for each scoring element by applying the process in 7.17.7 to each scoring element.
 - d. Table 4 shall be used to determine the overall score for the PI from the scores of the different scoring elements.
 - e. Where some scoring elements have been scored using the RBF, the converted MSC score shall be treated as an individual scoring element score when combining element scores in Table 4.

Table 4: Combining element scores

Score	Combination of individual scoring elements
<60	Any scoring element within a PI that fails to reach SG60 shall not be assigned a score. Teams shall record their rationale in narrative form for the PI rather than assigning actual scores of less than 60.
60	All elements meet SG60 and only SG60.
65	All elements meet SG60; a few achieve higher performance, at or exceeding SG80, but most do not meet SG80.
70	All elements meet SG60; some achieve higher performance, at or exceeding SG80, but some do not meet SG80 and require intervention action to make sure they get there.
75	All elements meet SG60; most achieve higher performance, at or exceeding SG80; only a few fail to achieve SG80 and require intervention action.
80	All elements meet SG80.

Score	Combination of individual scoring elements
85	All elements meet SG80; a few achieve higher performance, but most do not meet SG100.
90	All elements meet SG80; some achieve higher performance at SG100, but some do not.
95	All elements meet SG80; most achieve higher performance at SG100, and only a few fail to achieve SG100.
100	All elements meet SG100.

- 7.17.11 The team shall modify scores where appropriate:
- Downwards by the scores falling between 2 SGs obtained by the individual elements that fail to meet an upper SG level.
 - Upwards by the scores falling between 2 SGs obtained by the individual elements that exceed an upper SG level.
 - Upwards change should never rise as high as 80 if the team judges that a condition is required.
- 7.17.12 The CAB shall not certify the UoA if the weighted average score for all PIs under each Principle is less than 80 for any of the 3 Principles.
- 7.17.13 The CAB shall not certify the UoA if any individual scoring issue is not met at the SG60 level, contributing to a score of less than 60 on any PI.

7.18 Setting conditions

- 7.18.1 The CAB shall set 1 or more auditable and verifiable conditions for continuing certification if the UoA achieves a score of less than 80 but equal to or greater than 60 for any individual PI.
- 7.18.1.1 The CAB shall ensure that every PI that receives a score of less than 80 has its own distinct condition associated with it.
 - 7.18.1.2 The CAB shall draft conditions to follow the narrative or metric form of the Performance Indicator Scoring Guideposts and accompanying requirements used in the assessment tree. 
 - 7.18.1.3 The CAB shall draft conditions to result in improved performance to at least the 80 level within a period set by the CAB but no longer than the term of the certification.
 - 7.18.1.4 The CAB shall specify a deadline for each condition.
 - 7.18.1.5 The CAB shall draft conditions to specify milestones that detail:
 - The measurable improvements and outcomes (using quantitative metrics) expected each year.
 - The specific time frames over which the milestones and the whole condition must be met.
 - The outcome and score that shall be achieved at any interim milestones.
 - 7.18.1.6 If, at the time of drafting a condition, the CAB determines that there are exceptional circumstances, and the CAB determines that achieving a performance level of 80 may take longer than the period of certification, the CAB may draft conditions to result in improved performance to at least the 80 level within a longer, specified period set by the CAB. 

- a. The CAB shall interpret “exceptional circumstances” in 7.18.1.6 to refer to situations in which, even with perfect implementation, achieving the 80 level of performance may take longer than the certification period.
- b. In exceptional circumstances, the CAB shall specify conditions that spell out:
 - i. The significant and measurable improvements (in terms of milestones or outcomes) that must be achieved and the score that must be reached at interim milestones and at reassessment.
 - ii. What constitutes a successful overall outcome to achieve the 80 performance level over a longer, specified period.
- c. The CAB shall include justification for exceptional circumstances in the summary of conditions in the Client and Peer Review Draft Report and all subsequent reports.

7.18.1.7 The CAB shall create a summary of conditions stating the action(s) to be taken within a specified time frame.

7.18.2 Where the client and the CAB are unable to agree on conditions and milestones, the CAB shall not certify the UoA.

7.18.3 The CAB shall include conditions and milestones in the Client and Peer Review Draft Report and all subsequent reports.

7.18.4 If a condition or milestone relates to reducing uncertainty or improving processes, the CAB shall include in its reports a narrative about the ultimate ecological or management outcome that the condition aims to achieve over the longer term.

7.18.5 Where there are IPI stocks within the scope of certification, the team shall follow Annex PA1.3.

7.19 Client and Peer Review Draft Report

7.19.1 Once conditions, milestones and the point at which fish may enter further chains of custody have been determined, the CAB shall use the ‘MSC Reporting Template’ to create the Client and Peer Review Draft Report.

7.19.2 The CAB shall issue the Client and Peer Review Draft Report to the client and to the Peer Review College at the same time.

Peer review

7.19.3 The CAB shall arrange a review of the Client and Peer Review Draft Report, as detailed in Section 7.14, by peer reviewers from the Peer Review College.

7.19.4 The CAB shall allow the selected peer reviewers to review the Client and Peer Review Draft Report.

7.19.5 Upon receipt of the peer reviewers’ written comments, the team shall:

- a. Address all the issues raised, changing any part of the scoring, conditions and report as the team sees necessary. 
- b. Incorporate peer reviewer comments, team responses to those comments and any appropriate changes into the Client and Peer Review Draft Report to create the Public Comment Draft Report.
- c. Amend any conditions as required, and ensure the fishery client amends the Client Action Plan, as required.

Client review

7.19.6 The CAB should allow 60 days after receipt of the Client and Peer Review Draft Report for the client to: 

- a. Provide information on items that would lead to a 'material difference', as defined in 7.20.5.c, in the outcome of the assessment.
 - b. Develop a Client Action Plan.
 - i. The use of the 'MSC Client Action Plan Template' is optional.
- 7.19.7 The CAB shall verify that the client has prepared a Client Action Plan that includes: ■
- a. A description of the actions that will be implemented by the client, and other entities (where relevant) to achieve milestones and conditions.
 - b. Roles and responsibilities for actions.
 - c. The outputs that will be provided to the assessment team to demonstrate that milestones are achieved and progress toward meeting conditions is being made.
- 7.19.8 The CAB shall not accept a Client Action Plan if the client is relying upon the involvement, funding and/or resources of other entities (fisheries management or research agencies, authorities or regulating bodies that might have authority, power or control over management arrangements, research budgets and/or priorities) without:
- a. Verifying with those same entities, whether the closure of conditions is likely to require any or all of the following:
 - i. Investment of time or money by these entities.
 - ii. Changes to management arrangements or regulations.
 - iii. Re-arrangement of research priorities by these entities.
 - b. Being satisfied that the closure of conditions is both achievable by the client and realistic in the period specified.
- 7.19.9 If the CAB cannot find evidence to show that funding and/or resources are, or will be, in place to address conditions, the UoA shall not be certified.
- 7.19.10 The CAB shall document and retain any comments made by the client on the Client and Peer Review Draft Report and responses from the team.
- 7.19.10.1 The CAB shall make these comments and responses available to any party upon request.
- 7.19.11 If conditions are added as a result of the peer review, the CAB should allow an additional 30 days for the client to update the Client Action Plan.

7.20 Public Comment Draft Report

- 7.20.1 The CAB shall use the 'MSC Reporting Template' to create the Public Comment Draft Report.
- 7.20.2 When creating the Public Comment Draft Report, the team shall only make changes to scoring (Section 7.17) where:
- a. Justified by stakeholder, MSC, client, or peer reviewer comments received during consultation opportunities.
 - b. Justified by findings issued by the MSC's accreditation body.
 - c. The information considered to justify scoring changes was publicly available on or before the last day of the site visit.
 - i. If the CAB and any participant at the site visit agree in writing that information will be made available after the site visit, the CAB shall accept this information up to 30 days after the last day of the site visit.
- 7.20.3 The Public Comment Draft Report shall include:
- a. Confirmation that the fishery is in scope.
 - b. Confirmation of the assessment tree used to assess the fishery.

- c. The UoA(s).
 - d. The proposed UoC(s).
 - e. The scores and weightings for each PI.
 - f. A rationale for each PI and Scoring Issue (SI).
 - g. A reference list for each PI.
 - h. The draft determination on whether or not the UoA(s) will be recommended for certification.
 - i. A review of traceability practices used in the UoA(s).
 - j. The eligibility date.
 - k. The surveillance schedule.
 - l. Any conditions.
 - m. The Client Action Plan.
 - n. Peer review comments and team responses.
 - o. If the fishery is enhanced and is found to be within scope, an assessment of each enhancement activity undertaken by the fishery and a documented justification for the determination that the fishery is within scope.
 - p. Identification and justification for IPI stock(s).
 - q. A review of RBF outcomes, if completed.
- 7.20.4 Any references used to support statements in the evaluation tables of the reports shall be included in the References section of the evaluation table and an in-text reference (e.g. number or author, date) made to the relevant source.
- 7.20.5 The CAB shall include the following in a separate section or appendix to the Public Comment Draft Report:
- a. Written submissions from stakeholders (if any) received during consultation opportunities on:
 - i. The Announcement Comment Draft Report.
 - ii. The proposal for the modification of the default tree and/or use of the RBF (Annex PF).
 - b. All written submissions received during site visits.
 - c. A summary of verbal submissions received during site visits likely to cause a 'material difference' to the outcome of the assessment, including those with information that could influence:
 - i. A PI score falling below 60.
 - ii. A PI score falling between 60 and 80.
 - iii. A Principle score falling below an aggregate 80 score due to the changes to the score for 1 or more PIs.
 - iv. A change in scope (as per 7.4, 7.5.2 or 7.5.3).
 - d. Responses from the team to submissions described in 7.20.5.a, b and c, including:
 - i. What (if any) changes to scoring, rationales, or conditions have been made.
 - ii. Where changes are suggested but no change is made, a substantiated justification.
- 7.20.6 The CAB shall upload the following to the MSC database for publication on the MSC website:
- a. Any 'MSC Template for Stakeholder Input into Fishery Assessments' submitted by a stakeholder as per 7.20.5.a or 7.20.5.b.

- b. A 'MSC Template for Stakeholder Input into Fishery Assessments' with a summary of verbal submissions received during site visits as per 7.20.5.c.
- 7.20.7 Each 'MSC Template for Stakeholder Input into Fishery Assessments' uploaded as per 7.20.6 shall include responses from the team as per 7.20.5.d.
- 7.20.8 The CAB shall upload the Public Comment Draft Report to the MSC database for publication on the MSC website.
 - 7.20.8.1 The CAB shall upload an announcement with the Public Comment Draft Report including a hyperlink to the 'MSC Template for Stakeholder Input into Fishery Assessments' and the timeline for stakeholder input.
 - 7.20.8.2 The CAB shall inform stakeholders who submitted stakeholder input per 7.20.5.a, 7.20.5.b or 7.20.5.c that their input and the response from the team is published on the MSC website and available for review.
- 7.20.9 The CAB shall make the Public Comment Draft Report available for stakeholder input for at least 30 days.
 - 7.20.9.1 The CAB shall only consider stakeholder input on the Public Comment Draft Report from stakeholders who provided written input on the Announcement Comment Draft Report or attended the site visit, in person or remotely.
 - 7.20.9.2 The CAB shall inform stakeholders that they must provide objective evidence in support of any claims or any claimed errors of fact.

Peer reviewer comments and MSC Technical Oversight

- 7.20.10 The CAB shall make the Public Comment Draft Report available to the peer reviewers for follow-up review of the assessment team's responses to the peer reviewers' initial comments.
 - 7.20.10.1 The CAB shall make the Public Comment Draft Report available for peer reviewers at the same time as it is available for stakeholder input, for at least 30 days.
- 7.20.11 The CAB shall make the Public Comment Draft Report available for MSC to conduct Technical Oversight.
 - 7.20.11.1 The CAB shall make the report available for MSC at the same time as it is available for stakeholder input, for at least 30 days.

7.21 Determination

- 7.21.1 The team shall consider the suggested changes and comments made to the Public Comment Draft Report under Section 7.20 and shall confirm or amend the draft determination.
- 7.21.2 When creating the Final Draft Report, the team shall only make changes to scoring where:
 - a. Justified by stakeholder, MSC, client, or peer reviewer comments received during consultation opportunities.
 - b. Justified by findings issued by the MSC's accreditation body.
 - c. The information considered to justify scoring changes was publicly available on or before the last day of the site visit.
 - i. If the CAB and any participant at the site visit agree in writing that information will be made available after the site visit, the CAB shall accept this information up to 30 days after the last day of the site visit.
- 7.21.3 The team shall record the final determination in the Final Draft Report.
- 7.21.4 If changes to scoring have resulted in conditions being added or removed, the CAB shall give the client 20 days to make any amendments to the Client Action Plan.

- 7.21.4.1 Once complete, the CAB shall add the amended Client Action Plan to the Final Draft Report.

7.22 Final Draft Report

- 7.22.1 If the period from the full assessment announcement to the publication of the Final Draft Report by the MSC is more than 18 months, the CAB shall withdraw the fishery from the MSC assessment process.
- 7.22.2 The CAB shall use the 'MSC Reporting Template' to create the Final Draft Report.
- 7.22.3 The CAB shall include the following in a separate section or appendix to the Final Draft Report: ■
- a. Written submissions from stakeholders (if any) received during the consultation opportunity on:
 - i. The Announcement Comment Draft Report.
 - ii. The Public Comment Draft Report.
 - b. All written submissions received during site visits.
 - c. A summary of verbal submissions received during site visits likely to cause a 'material difference' to the outcome of the assessment, including those with information that could influence:
 - i. A PI score falling below 60.
 - ii. A PI score falling between 60 and 80.
 - iii. A Principle score falling below an aggregate 80 score due to the changes to the score for 1 or more PIs.
 - iv. A change in scope (as per 7.4, 7.5.2 or 7.5.3).
 - d. If applicable, peer review follow-up and MSC Technical Oversight submissions.
 - e. Responses from the team to the submissions in 7.22.3.a–d, including:
 - i. What (if any) changes to scoring, rationales, or conditions have been made.
 - ii. Where changes are suggested but no change is made, a substantiated justification.
- 7.22.4 The CAB shall upload the Final Draft Report to the MSC database for publication on the MSC website.
- 7.22.4.1 The CAB shall upload an announcement with the Final Draft Report including information about the process and timeline for stakeholder input as set out in the MSC Disputes Process.
- 7.22.5 The CAB shall upload the following to the MSC database:
- a. Any 'MSC Template for Stakeholder Input into Fishery Assessments' submitted by a stakeholder during the assessment containing stakeholder input and the CAB responses as per 7.22.3 a, b, c and e.
 - b. Any 'MSC Template for Stakeholder Input into Fishery Assessments' with a summary of verbal submissions containing stakeholder input and the CAB responses as per 7.22.3 c and e.

7.23 MSC Disputes Process

- 7.23.1 The CAB shall follow the process and timeline as set out in the [MSC Disputes Process](#) before publishing the Public Certification Report.

7.24 Public Certification Report

- 7.24.1 At the end of the full assessment process, the CAB shall finalise a Public Certification Report in accordance with this section that shall incorporate the Final Draft Report and, if relevant, results arising from the [MSC Disputes Process](#).
- 7.24.2 The CAB shall use the 'MSC Reporting Template' to create the Public Certification Report.
- 7.24.3 The CAB shall upload the Public Certification Report to the MSC database for publication on the MSC website, identifying a determination to certify or fail the fishery.
- 7.24.3.1 The CAB shall upload to the MSC database, for publication on the MSC website, an announcement with the Public Certification Report including the determination to certify or fail the fishery.
- 7.24.4 The CAB shall determine which entities should or should not be allowed to use the fishery certificate.
- 7.24.5 The CAB shall only permit fish caught by those fishers that are identified by reference to or on a valid fishery certificate to be eligible for Chain of Custody certification and subsequent use of the MSC ecolabel.
- 7.24.5.1 The CAB shall define entities in this case to include any processing companies, producer organisations or other bodies to whom the client wishes to make the certificate available, at the exclusion of other non-client group members.
- 7.24.5.2 The CAB shall upload a Fishery Certificate Statement to the MSC database for publication on the MSC website defining:
- a. Which entities (vessels, fleets, agents and/or any other client group members, including named companies) are currently eligible to access the certificate.
 - i. If a group of vessels or individual fishing operators (i.e. not an entire fishing fleet) is used to define the Unit of Assessment or Unit of Certification for the fishery, the CAB shall require the client to provide a list of the vessels, or a hyperlink to a publicly available list of vessels, for the CAB to upload to the MSC database for publication.
 - b. Which other eligible fishers, if identified in the UoA, may be able to access the certificate through the mechanism of certificate sharing.
 - c. Which points of landing, auctions or other transfer may be used for the sale of fish from the certified fishery into further chains of custody.
 - d. Any other limits to product eligibility, such as specific terms of the certificate sharing agreement.
- 7.24.5.3 If there are any changes related to information on the Fishery Certificate Statement, the CAB shall update the Fishery Certificate Statement by uploading a new version with changes to the MSC database for publication on the MSC website within 14 days of the change, except for the list of vessels detailed in 7.24.5.2.a.i.
- 7.24.6 The CAB shall update information under 7.24.5.2.a at every surveillance audit.

7.25 Certification decision and certificate issue

- 7.25.1 If the CAB makes a decision to award certification, the CAB shall determine that the date of certification is the date the Public Certification Report is published on the MSC website or, for reassessments, the 5th anniversary date of the existing certificate, whichever is later.
- 7.25.2 The CAB shall add catch data into the MSC database, for each UoC for the most recent fishing year for which data is available.
- 7.25.2.1 The CAB shall complete this within 10 days from the date the Public Certification Report has been published on the MSC website.

- 7.25.3 The CAB shall upload a copy of the issued fishery certificate(s) to the MSC database for publication on the MSC website.
- 7.25.3.1 The CAB shall ensure that the date of certification on each fishery certificate matches the date in 7.25.1.
- 7.25.3.2 The CAB shall submit a copy of the issued certificate(s) up to 10 days from the date the Public Certification Report has been published on the MSC website.
- 7.25.4 When changes to the information contained on a fishery certificate are made, the CAB shall ensure the updated copy of the fishery certificate is provided to the MSC for posting on its website within 10 days of changes occurring.

7.26 Fisheries that fail or withdraw from assessment

Fisheries that withdraw from assessment

- 7.26.1 In circumstances where the fishery client makes the decision not to proceed with the assessment, the fishery can be withdrawn from assessment at any time.

Fisheries that fail assessment

- 7.26.2 Where the CAB makes a decision not to award certification and fail the fishery, the CAB shall upload the Public Certification Report to the MSC database for publication on the MSC website.
- 7.26.3 The CAB shall include the following in the Public Certification Report of the failed fishery:
- Draft and non-binding conditions for any PIs that score more than 60 but less than 80.
 - Specification that the conditions outlined are non-binding and serve to provide an indication of the actions that may have been required should the fishery have been certified.
- 7.26.4 The CAB shall not include the following in the Public Certification Report of the failed fishery:
- Mandatory conditions or defined actions that would need to be undertaken before the fishery could be reconsidered for certification in the future.
 - An agreement from the client to address conditions as in 7.19.7.

Fisheries that re-enter assessment

- 7.26.5 If a withdrawn or failed fishery, or a fishery that contains a UoA that has failed or withdrawn from assessment, re-enters full assessment, the CAB shall follow the most recent versions of the MSC Fisheries Program Documents in full. 
- 7.26.6 In assessment reports for withdrawn or failed fisheries that have re-entered full assessment, the CAB shall:
- Specify that the fishery has re-entered full assessment.
 - Summarise the details of the initial assessment, including:
 - The results of the original assessment.
 - The date of the original determination not to certify.
 - Identify those PIs for which scoring and/or the rationale for scoring has changed from the original assessment.

7.27 Extension of scope of fishery certificate (scope extensions)

- 7.27.1 The CAB may extend the scope of an existing fishery certificate to include another fishery within its scope, providing:

- a. The target Principle 1 species of the new proposed fishery was previously assessed under Principle 1 or Principle 2 of the existing fishery certificate.
 - b. The 2 fisheries have some assessment tree components that are the same. ■
 - c. The fisheries are in close geographical proximity. ■
- 7.27.2 The CAB shall only accept a request for a scope extension from a holder of a valid MSC fishery certificate.
- 7.27.3 Where the client of an existing certificate requests a scope extension, the CAB shall use the version of the assessment tree that was used for the assessment of the existing certified fishery in the assessment of the new fishery.
- 7.27.4 The CAB shall assign a person that meets the fishery team member qualification and competency criteria as set out in Table PC2 to identify the assessment components in the new proposed fishery and carry out a gap analysis to confirm which assessment components are the same as for the certified fishery. ■
- 7.27.5 If all the assessment tree components of the new fishery are the same as for the certified fishery, the fishery is an other eligible fisher. ■
- a. If the new fisher group was not clearly identified at the start of the assessment as such an other eligible fisher (and thereby included in the UoA), it may still be possible to extend the certificate providing:
 - i. The client is willing to extend the certificate to the applicant fishery.
 - ii. The CAB confirms that all assessment tree components are the same as for the existing fishery certificate.
 - iii. The CAB confirms that extending the scope of the certificate does not have implications for any PIs.
 - b. If the CAB has confirmed that the new fisher group is an other eligible fisher group, the CAB shall publish an announcement and completed gap analysis informing stakeholders that the group has been added.
- 7.27.6 If some assessment tree components are not the same as assessment components in the certified fishery, the CAB shall complete a scope extension according to Annex PE.
- 7.27.7 If the scope extension assessment results in certification, the duration of the certificate for the scope extension shall only be as long as the existing fishery certificate.
- 7.27.8 The CAB shall draft conditions, as detailed in Section 7.18, to result in improved performance to at least the 80 level within a period set by the CAB but no longer than 5 years from the date of certification of the scope-extended fishery. ■
- 7.27.9 Reassessment of both the scope-extended fishery and the originally certified fishery shall be carried out at the same time and using the version of the MSC Fisheries Standard that is effective.
- 7.27.10 The scope extension mechanism described here and in Annex PE shall be used by an existing fishery seeking to modify its UoA(s) by moving a species previously considered in Principle 2 to Principle 1.

CAB assistance with certificate sharing

- 7.27.11 If the certificate has other eligible fishers and/or a certificate sharing mechanism, the CAB shall, within 30 days of receiving a request to share the certificate, facilitate the client's and other eligible fishers' engagement in good faith efforts to enter into a certificate sharing agreement.
- 7.27.12 If an on-land (non-fishing) entity wishes to join the client group, the CAB shall consider the factors in Section 7.9 to determine whether Chain of Custody certification is required.

7.28 Surveillance

Surveillance level

- 7.28.1 During each initial assessment, surveillance and reassessment, the team shall determine the level at which subsequent surveillance of the fishery shall be undertaken.
- 7.28.2 Surveillance audits shall take place according to the default surveillance level described in Table 5, unless the team decides on a reduced surveillance schedule, see 7.28.4–7.28.7. 

Table 5: Surveillance levels

Surveillance level	Surveillance requirements
Level 6 <i>Default surveillance</i>	4 on-site surveillance audits
Level 5	3 on-site surveillance audits 1 off-site surveillance audit
Level 4	2 on-site surveillance audits 2 off-site surveillance audits
Level 3	1 on-site surveillance audit 3 off-site surveillance audits
Level 2	1 on-site surveillance audit 2 off-site surveillance audits 1 review of information
Level 1 <i>Minimum surveillance</i>	1 on-site surveillance audit 1 off-site surveillance audit 2 reviews of information

- 7.28.3 The following types of surveillance audit are available:
- On-site audit. The audit involves face-to-face engagement with the client, conducting stakeholder interviews and a review of changes in management and science in the fishery.
 - Off-site audit. The audit involves engagement with the client, conducting stakeholder interviews and a review of changes in management and science in the fishery and is undertaken by the auditors from a remote location.
 - Review of information. The audit involves seeking the views of the client and identifying whether there are any issues requiring further investigation. The audit is undertaken from a remote location. The CAB publishes a statement of review of information.
- 7.28.4 The CAB shall determine whether the fishery is eligible for a reduction of surveillance levels dependent upon the number of conditions outstanding and the ability of the CAB to remotely verify information and progress against the conditions. 
- 7.28.4.1 The surveillance level for the fishery shall be determined on the basis of the confidence of the CAB in its ability to remotely verify information and progress towards meeting conditions.

- a. Surveillance level 1 may only be chosen if, following an assessment or surveillance audit, the fishery has no outstanding conditions.
- 7.28.5 Where a reduced surveillance level is adopted, the team shall provide a justification for how the fishery meets the criteria in 7.28.4.
- 7.28.6 The CAB shall determine whether the fishery is eligible for a reduction in the number of team members dependent upon the certification period, number of conditions and the ability of the CAB to remotely verify information and progress against the conditions. !!
 - 7.28.6.1 In the initial certification period, the number of auditors for surveillance activities shall be at least 2. The on-site audit may be undertaken by a minimum of 1 auditor who is supported by the rest of the team from 1 or more remote location(s).
 - 7.28.6.2 In the second and subsequent certification periods, a reduced team of 1 auditor may be used if the fishery has conditions associated with only 1 Principle, or no conditions.
 - 7.28.6.3 If a fishery is not eligible for a reduced team in the second or subsequent certification periods, the on-site audit may be undertaken by a minimum of 1 auditor who is supported by the rest of the team from 1 or more remote location(s).
- 7.28.7 Where a reduced team is adopted, the team shall provide a justification for how the fishery meets the criteria in 7.28.6.

Surveillance audit timing

- 7.28.8 The CAB shall undertake surveillance audits within 30 days prior to the anniversary date of the certificate unless the following applies.
 - 7.28.8.1 The CAB may elect to undertake surveillance audits up to 6 months earlier or later than the anniversary date, where this deviation is appropriate given the circumstances of the fishery. !!
 - a. The CAB shall provide a justification for deviating from the anniversary date as part of the surveillance schedule.
- 7.28.9 The CAB shall undertake 4 surveillance audits before the 5th anniversary of the existing certificate.

Surveillance schedule

- 7.28.10 The CAB shall agree a surveillance schedule for the duration of the certificate with the client, based on 7.28.1–7.28.9.
- 7.28.11 The CAB shall publish the surveillance schedule in the Public Comment Draft Report.
 - 7.28.11.1 The CAB shall review the proposed surveillance schedule for the Final Draft Report and Public Certification Report to take account of any changes to the assessment.
- 7.28.12 The CAB may amend the surveillance schedule prior to a surveillance audit.
 - 7.28.12.1 If changes are made, the CAB shall note where amendments to the surveillance schedule have been made, along with justification for the change, in the 'MSC Surveillance Announcement Template'.
- 7.28.13 The CAB may amend the surveillance schedule following a surveillance audit.
 - 7.28.13.1 If changes are made, the CAB shall note where amendments to the surveillance schedule have been made, along with justification for the change, in the Surveillance Report.

Preparing the surveillance audit

- 7.28.14 The CAB shall plan each surveillance audit as follows.

- 7.28.14.1 During the initial surveillance cycle, the CAB shall appoint a team of 2 or more auditors to conduct the surveillance audit.
- a. The team shall comprise of a team leader and a minimum of 1 additional team member who together meet at least 3 of the Fishery Team qualifications and competency requirements, see Table PC3.
- 7.28.14.2 During the 2nd or subsequent surveillance cycles, the CAB shall appoint 1 or more auditors to conduct the surveillance audit following the requirements set out in 7.28.6.2.
- a. If 2 or more auditors are appointed as the team, the requirements set out 7.28.14.1.a shall apply.
 - b. If a single auditor is appointed, the auditor shall meet the team leader requirements specified in Table PC1 and at least 1 of the fishery team qualification and competency criteria from Table PC3 relevant to the outstanding conditions in the fishery.
- 7.28.14.3 The CAB shall ensure that the team has local knowledge of the fishery.
- 7.28.14.4 If the RBF has been used in the assessment, the CAB shall ensure that the team meets the RBF competency requirements, see Table PC3.
- 7.28.14.5 The CAB shall use the 'MSC Surveillance Announcement Template' to inform stakeholders and the MSC of:
- a. Time, dates and location of the surveillance activities.
 - b. What will be assessed/reviewed during the audit.
 - c. The relevant skills and expertise of auditors carrying out the surveillance audit.
- 7.28.14.6 The CAB shall upload the Surveillance Announcement to the MSC database for publication on the MSC website at least 30 days before the surveillance audit activities are carried out.

Surveillance audit activities

- 7.28.15 During each on-site and off-site surveillance audit, the CAB shall:
- a. Actively seek the views of the client on:
 - i. Changes to the fishery and its management.
 - ii. Performance in relation to any relevant conditions of certification.
 - iii. Any developments or changes within the fishery that affect traceability and the ability to segregate MSC from non-MSC products.
 - iv. Any other significant changes in the fishery.
 - b. Hold interviews and actively seek the views of stakeholders and surveillance audit participants to ensure that the team is aware of any stakeholder concerns.
 - i. Where stakeholders do not wish to be interviewed, the team shall inform them that they may submit written information to the team.
 - c. Apply the provisions set out in Sections 4.3-4.5 regarding access to information.
 - d. If a group of vessels or individual fishing operators (i.e. not an entire fishing fleet) is used to define the UoA or UoC for the fishery, require the client to provide an updated list of the vessels, or a hyperlink to a publicly available list of vessels.
 - i. The CAB shall upload the updated vessel list or hyperlink to the MSC database to be published on the MSC website.
 - e. Review:
 - i. Any potential or actual changes in management systems.

- ii. Any changes or additions/deletions to regulations.
 - iii. Any personnel changes in science, management or industry and their impact on the management of the fishery.
 - iv. Any potential changes to scientific information, including stock assessments.
 - v. Any changes affecting traceability.
 - vi. Any changes affecting harmonisation of overlapping fisheries, see PB1.3.5.
- 7.28.15.1 Where the information for PI scores has changed, the CAB shall:
- a. Report and record what information has changed.
 - b. Re-score the PI following scoring processes set out in Section 7.17.
 - i. If the new score is less than 80, the CAB shall define conditions and require the client to develop a Client Action Plan for the new conditions.
- 7.28.16 At each on-site or off-site surveillance audit, the team shall evaluate progress against conditions.
- 7.28.16.1 The team shall audit conformity with, and progress and performance against, certification conditions.
- a. The CAB shall document conformity with, and progress and performance against, certification conditions using the narrative or metric form of the original condition.
 - b. The CAB shall document whether progress is 'on target', 'ahead of target' or 'behind target', as well as its justification for such a judgement.
 - i. If progress against the measurable outcomes, expected results or (interim) milestones specified when setting the condition is judged to be behind target the CAB may specify remedial action, and any revised milestones, that are required to bring progress back on target within 12 months to achieve the original condition by the original deadline.
- 7.28.16.2 If the CAB determines that progress against a condition is not back 'on target' within 12 months of falling 'behind target', the CAB shall:
- a. Consider progress as inadequate.
 - b. Apply the requirements of [GCR Section 7.4](#) (suspension or withdrawal).
 - c. Inform the fishery client that they cannot enter the same Unit of Certification(s), or any entity in the Unit(s) of Certification, into full assessment under either the same or an alternative name unless the cause for suspension has been addressed.
- 7.28.16.3 To verify that conditions have been met and outcomes have been achieved, the CAB shall:
- a. Examine relevant objective evidence.
 - b. Re-score all relevant Performance Indicator Scoring Guideposts relating to that condition and only if the score is raised above 80 should the condition be closed out.
 - c. Document the justification for the re-scoring and closing out of the condition in the Surveillance Report.
- 7.28.16.4 If a condition is not closed by its deadline, the CAB shall:
- a. Consider progress as inadequate.
 - b. Apply the requirements of [GCR Section 7.4](#) (suspension or withdrawal).
 - c. Inform the fishery client that they cannot enter the same Unit(s) of Certification, or any entity in the Unit of Certification(s), into full assessment

under either the same or an alternative name unless the cause for suspension has been addressed. ■

- 7.28.17 During each review of information surveillance audit, the CAB shall perform the activities specified in 7.28.15.a.
- 7.28.17.1 If the CAB becomes aware of changes to the circumstances of the fishery, and/or of new information, that may cause a 'material difference' as defined in 7.20.5.c during a review of information audit, it shall undertake an off-site audit according to 7.28.15.
- 7.28.18 In the event that the CAB determines that the information required to carry out an off-site surveillance audit or a review of information has not been provided or is unavailable, the CAB shall conduct an on-site audit.

Reporting

- 7.28.19 The CAB shall prepare a Surveillance Report according to the relevant MSC template:
- For on-site and off-site surveillance audits, fisheries surveillance reports shall conform to the 'MSC Surveillance Reporting Template'.
 - For review of information surveillance audits, fisheries surveillance review of information reports shall conform to the 'MSC Surveillance Review of Information Template'.
- 7.28.20 The CAB shall send the Surveillance Report to the client along with any requests or conditions that may arise from surveillance activities.
- 7.28.20.1 Where new conditions are identified, the CAB should allow a period of up to 30 days after receipt of the Surveillance Report for the client to prepare a Client Action Plan.
- 7.28.21 The CAB shall include the following in a separate section or appendix to the Surveillance Report:
- All written submissions and a summary of verbal submissions made by stakeholders during the annual surveillance audit process.
 - Responses from the team to the submissions in 7.28.21.a, including:
 - What (if any) changes to scoring, rationales or conditions have been made.
 - Where changes are suggested but no change is made, a substantiated justification.
- 7.28.22 At the time of submission of each Surveillance Report, the CAB shall add catch data into the MSC database, for each UoC, for the most recent fishing year for which data is available.
- 7.28.23 The CAB shall upload the Surveillance Report to the MSC database within 60 days of completing the audit for publication on the MSC website. ■
- 7.28.23.1 If the client has revised the Client Action Plan following surveillance, the CAB shall upload the Surveillance Report to the MSC database within 90 days of completing the audit for publication on the MSC website.

Additional audit considerations

- 7.28.24 Where there are IPI stock(s) within the scope of certification, the team shall follow Annex PA during each surveillance audit.

7.29 Expedited audits

- 7.29.1 The CAB shall complete an expedited audit if the CAB becomes aware of changes to the circumstances of the fishery and/or of new information that may cause: ■

- a. A PI score falling below 60.
 - b. A Principle score falling below an aggregate 80 score due to the changes to the score for 1 or more PIs.
 - c. A change in scope (as per 7.4, 7.5.2 or 7.5.3).
- 7.29.2 The CAB shall assign an individual that meets the fishery team leader qualification and competency criteria as set out in the [GCR](#) and Table PC1, and is competent to review the relevant information.
- 7.29.2.1 The CAB shall send the assigned individual the relevant information for review.
 - 7.29.2.2 The assigned individual shall determine whether an expedited audit should be completed.
- 7.29.3 An expedited audit can be an off-site audit or on-site audit, based on what the CAB determines necessary.
- 7.29.4 The CAB shall announce an expedited audit, if triggered, within 30 days of becoming aware of the relevant information.
- 7.29.4.1 The CAB shall appoint a team of 2 or more auditors to conduct the expedited audit.
 - a. The team shall comprise of a team leader and a minimum of 1 additional team member who together meet the Fishery Team qualifications and competency requirements relevant to what will be assessed.
 - 7.29.4.2 The CAB shall use the 'MSC Surveillance Announcement Template' to inform stakeholders and the MSC of:
 - a. Time, dates and location of the expedited audit activities.
 - b. What will be assessed/reviewed during the expedited audit.
 - c. The relevant skills and expertise of auditors carrying out the expedited audit.
 - 7.29.4.3 The CAB shall upload the Surveillance Announcement to the MSC database for publication on the MSC website.
- 7.29.5 The CAB shall consider the relevant information by completing the activities as defined in 7.28.15 except for 7.28.15.a.ii.
- 7.29.6 The CAB shall prepare an expedited audit report using the 'MSC Surveillance Reporting Template'.
- 7.29.7 The CAB shall send the expedited audit report to the client along with any new conditions.
- 7.29.8 The CAB shall upload the expedited audit report to the MSC database for publication on the MSC website, within 60 days of announcing the expedited audit.
- 7.29.9 The CAB may elect to include the expedited audit in a surveillance audit providing that:
- a. The surveillance audit is announced within 30 days of the CAB becoming aware of the relevant information.
 - b. The CAB follows Section 7.28.

Expedited audits during a full assessment or scope extension

- 7.29.10 If the CAB becomes aware of changes to the circumstances of the fishery and/or of new information after the site visit, except for information subject to 7.17.1.1.a, the CAB shall follow 7.29.1–7.29.8 during the initial assessment. ■
- 7.29.10.1 The CAB shall not use the results of the expedited audit in the determination or certification decision for the UoA(s).
- 7.29.11 For an expedited audit conducted during an initial assessment or scope extension, if the 60-day reporting deadline (7.29.8) is prior to the publication of the Public Certification

Report, the CAB shall upload the expedited audit report to the MSC database for publication on the MSC website on the same date as the Public Certification Report.

- 7.29.11.1 If the expedited audit results in a score of less than 60 for any PI or a weighted average score of less than 80 for any Principle, the CAB shall apply [GCR Section 7.4](#) (suspension or withdrawal) with the following modifications:
- a. The CAB shall set the effective date for the fishery certificate suspension as the date of certification, disregarding the 30-day notice period.
 - b. The CAB shall announce the suspension by completing and uploading the 'MSC Notice of Suspension Template' to the scheme database, to be published on the MSC website on the date of certification.
 - c. If the eligibility date was set before the date of certification, the CAB shall inform the client and stakeholders in the notice of suspension that the eligibility date is changed to the certification date.
- 7.29.12 If the CAB becomes aware of changes to the circumstances of the fishery and/or new information during a reassessment, the CAB shall follow 7.29.1–7.29.8 for both the existing certificate and the reassessment. ▣
- 7.29.12.1 For an expedited audit conducted during a reassessment, if the 60-day reporting deadline (7.29.8) is prior to the publication of the Public Certification Report, the CAB may upload one expedited audit report that includes the results for both the existing certificate and the reassessment.
- 7.29.12.2 If the expedited audit results in a score of less than 60 for any PI or a weighted average score of less than 80 for any Principle, the CAB shall:
- a. For the existing certificate, apply the requirements of [GCR Section 7.4](#) (suspension or withdrawal).
 - b. For the reassessment, apply [GCR Section 7.4](#) (suspension or withdrawal) with the following modifications:
 - i. The CAB shall set the effective date for the fishery certificate suspension as the date of certification disregarding the 30-day notice period.
 - ii. The CAB shall announce the suspension by completing and uploading the 'MSC Notice of Suspension Template' to the scheme database, to be published on the MSC website on the date of certification.
 - iii. If the eligibility date was set before the date of certification, the CAB shall inform the client and stakeholders in the notice of suspension that the eligibility date is changed to the certification date.

7.30 Reassessment

- 7.30.1 The CAB shall announce the reassessment of a certified fishery no later than 90 days after the 4th anniversary of the existing certificate.
- 7.30.1.1 Exact timing and planning of the reassessment shall remain the responsibility of the CAB, in consultation with the client.
- 7.30.2 The CAB may change the scope of a fishery to include or remove other UoA(s) as part of the reassessment.

Full reassessment activities

- 7.30.3 When undertaking a reassessment of a certified fishery, the CAB shall apply all the steps of the FCP version effective at the time of the announcement of the reassessment.
- 7.30.4 If a modified assessment tree was used during the initial assessment, the CAB shall consult on reapplication of this modified assessment tree if no appropriate new default assessment tree has been released by the MSC.

- 7.30.5 The CAB shall consider all surveillance reports and outcomes and evaluate progress against certification conditions. Unless exceptional circumstances as set out in 7.18.1.6 or 7.30.5.3 apply, the fishery shall have met all conditions and milestones.
- 7.30.5.1 The CAB shall clearly identify all open conditions in the reassessment Announcement Comment Draft Report. ■
- a. The CAB shall clearly identify if an open condition is being carried over into the next certificate. ■
 - b. The CAB shall clearly identify if an open condition will be closed during the reassessment.
 - i. The CAB shall outline how and when the condition will be closed during the reassessment.
- 7.30.5.2 If there are any open conditions, the team shall apply 7.28.16.1, 7.28.16.2.a and 7.28.16.4.a to determine the adequacy of progress against those conditions and milestones.
- a. If the CAB concludes that the client has made inadequate progress, the CAB shall withdraw the fishery from reassessment.
- 7.30.5.3 If an open condition is written against a PI in the assessment tree that differs from that in the tree being used in the reassessment, the CAB shall consider whether the condition as originally drafted is appropriate to deliver the SG80 outcome for the PI, or the equivalent PI, in the reassessment tree.
- a. If the condition is appropriate to deliver the SG80 outcome in the tree being used in the reassessment, the CAB shall evaluate progress against the conditions according to 7.30.5.2.
 - b. If the condition is not appropriate to deliver the SG80 outcome in the tree being used in the reassessment, the CAB shall consider what action is needed to deliver the outcome required at SG80 level and evaluate whether this outcome has been achieved.
 - i. If the SG80 outcome has not been achieved, the CAB shall rewrite the condition against the reassessment tree, in accordance with 7.18.1.
 - ii. If the SG80 outcome has been achieved, or if achievement of the condition would not affect the score of any PI that would otherwise score less than 80 in the reassessment tree, the CAB shall apply 7.28.16.3 to close the condition.
- 7.30.5.4 The CAB shall include its consideration of the issues above, as well as any justification for decisions made relating to these issues, in the 'MSC Reporting Template'.
- 7.30.6 The CAB shall clearly identify related conditions that are set during reassessment, and include a justification for each. ■
- 7.30.7 Where there are IPI stock(s) within the fishery, the CAB shall follow Annex PA.
- 7.30.8 The CAB shall follow the [MSC Disputes Process](#) during reassessment.
- 7.30.9 The CAB shall use the 'MSC Reporting Template' to create the Full Reassessment Report.

Reduced reassessment activities

- 7.30.10 A fishery is eligible for reduced reassessment if:
- a. The fishery was covered under the previous certification or scope extension.
 - b. The fishery had no conditions remaining after the 3rd surveillance audit.
 - c. The CAB confirms that all Standard-related stakeholder input has been addressed by the 3rd surveillance audit.

- 7.30.11 When multiple fisheries want to combine their UoCs into one reassessment, the CAB may conduct a reduced reassessment provided all fisheries meet the eligibility criteria under 7.30.10.
- 7.30.12 If the fishery is eligible for reduced reassessment, the CAB shall provide a detailed explanation of how the reduced reassessment criteria are satisfied at the time of announcing the reassessment.
- 7.30.13 A reduced reassessment shall follow the full reassessment requirements, except that: ■
- a. The CAB may undertake the assessment with 1 team member on-site and other team member(s) working from 1 or more remote location(s).
 - i. The CAB shall determine which team member competencies are required on-site and remotely, based on:
 - A. The topic(s) raised in previous audits by stakeholders.
 - B. The availability of information on Principle 1, Principle 2 or Principle 3 components that would enable comprehensive review by an off-site team member.
 - b. Only 1 peer reviewer is required to review the reassessment peer review report.
- 7.30.14 The CAB shall use the 'MSC Reduced Reassessment Reporting Template' to create the Reduced Reassessment Report.

7.31 Management system requirements for CABs

- 7.31.1 The CAB shall conduct and document a review of each full fishery assessment completed to identify any corrective or preventive actions that would contribute to continual improvement of the assessment process.
- 7.31.1.1 The CAB shall consider submissions and/or comments from stakeholders or other parties on the CAB's activities and processes in the review.
 - 7.31.1.2 The CAB shall keep records of the reviews.
- 7.31.2 For any complaint evaluated by the CAB as per [GCR 7.6.2](#), and which relates to the MSC Fisheries Program, the CAB shall send a summary of the complaint and decision(s) taken to the MSC via complaints@msc.org within 20 days of closure of the complaint.

End of Fisheries Certification Process

Annex PA: Requirements for inseparable or practicably inseparable (IPI) stocks – normative

PA1 Requirements for inseparable or practicably inseparable (IPI) stocks

PA1.1 Scope

PA1.1.1 The requirements of this annex shall apply to all inseparable or practicably inseparable (IPI) catch within fisheries being assessed.

PA1.2 Default assessment tree

PA1.2.1 The Conformity Assessment Body (CAB) shall review and, if necessary, propose modifications to the default assessment tree to proceed with the assessment of IPI stock(s).

PA1.2.2 Using the tree, the CAB shall:

- a. Assess the IPI catch under the primary or secondary species component of Principle 2.
- b. Separately assess the impact of all fishing activity on the IPI stock(s) considered for entry into certified chains of custody using the criteria specified in PA1.4.2, for the purposes of determining the eligibility for the catches of IPI stock(s) to enter further certified chains of custody.

PA1.3 Conditions

PA1.3.1 Where there are IPI stock(s) within the scope of certification, the CAB shall set conditions to promote the future Principle 1 assessment of the IPI stock(s), or to promote the development of techniques to effectively separate catches of currently IPI stock(s).

PA1.4 Entry into further Chains of Custody

PA1.4.1 The CAB shall ensure that only defined and limited proportions of catches from IPI stock(s) enter into certified chains of custody.

PA1.4.1.1 The MSC ecolabel is only permitted for use on these catches for a maximum of 1 certification period.

PA1.4.2 The CAB shall verify that the IPI stock(s) meet the following requirements, prior to being considered eligible to enter further certified chains of custody:

- a. The IPI stock(s) are likely to be above biologically based limits as defined in [MSC Fisheries Standard Table SA8](#), or if below the limits, there are measures in place that are expected to make sure that all fishing-related mortality does not hinder the recovery and rebuilding of IPI stock(s).
- b. If the stock status is poorly known, there are measures or practices in place that are expected to keep the IPI stock(s) above biologically based limits, or to prevent all fishing activity from hindering recovery.
- c. The measures are considered likely to work, based on plausible argument (e.g. general experience, theory or comparison with similar fisheries/species).

PA1.5 Surveillance

PA1.5.1 If the fishery includes IPI stock(s), the CAB shall review and document the continuing performance against conditions in PA1.3.1 and against the requirements in PA1.4.2.

PA1.6 Reassessment

PA1.6.1 IPI stock(s) are only eligible for the period of 1 certificate. For continued certification, the CAB shall inform clients of the following options:

- a. Certify all IPI stock(s) against Principle 1 at reassessment, or
- b. Develop techniques to effectively separate catches of currently IPI stock(s), from target stock(s) so the IPI scope criteria are no longer met, or
- c. Develop measures to reduce the proportion of IPI stock(s) to be able to meet the requirements for IPI stock(s) as set out in FCP 7.5.12.2.

PA1.6.2 The CAB shall assess remaining IPI stock(s) against Principle 1 at reassessment.

End of Annex PA

Annex PB: Harmonised fisheries – normative

PB1 Harmonised fisheries – normative

PB1.1 Scope

PB1.1.1 CABs shall use this annex where Unit of Assessments (UoAs) overlap.

PB1.2 Assessment tree

Different versions of standards

PB1.2.1 Fishery assessments using the same versions of any assessment tree ([MSC Fisheries Standard Annex SA](#), Annex SB, Annex SC and Annex SD) shall harmonise their assessments.

PB1.3 Harmonised fishery assessments for overlapping fisheries

PB1.3.1 Teams assessing overlapping UoAs shall ensure consistency of outcomes so as not to undermine the integrity of MSC fishery assessments.

PB1.3.2 Teams shall prepare for harmonisation with overlapping UoAs no later than the site visit stage.

PB1.3.3 Where assessments of 2 or more fisheries occur simultaneously, teams shall coordinate their assessments to ensure that harmonisation of important steps in the assessment and subsequent surveillance audits takes place and that outcomes are harmonised.

PB1.3.3.1 Teams shall undertake all the following:

- a. Coordination meetings between teams.
- b. Coordinated assessment planning and conduct, including coordinated process steps and publications of assessment products.
- c. Use of common assessment trees where appropriate.
- d. Sharing of fishery information.

PB1.3.3.2 Teams shall ensure that conclusions are consistent between the 2 (or more) fishery assessments, with respect to evaluation, scoring and conditions.

PB1.3.3.3 If teams reach agreement on score(s) and rationale(s), the score(s) shall be adopted.

PB1.3.3.4 Where teams have applied the activities outlined in PB1.3.3.1 and conclusions remain inconsistent with respect to evaluation, scoring and conditions, teams shall undertake the following:

- a. Convene a harmonisation discussion.
 - i. In the event the discussion leads to agreement among teams, the agreed score(s) shall be adopted by all teams.
 - ii. In the event the discussion does not lead to agreement among teams, the lowest score(s) shall be adopted by all teams.
- b. Change(s) shall be included in the next report (e.g. Announcement Draft Report or Public Comment Draft Report) produced for any fishery in assessment.

- PB1.3.4 Where a UoA under assessment overlaps with a certified UoA, teams shall coordinate their assessments to make sure that key assessment products and outcomes are harmonised.
- PB1.3.4.1 Where an assessment overlaps with a certified UoA or UoA in assessment that has already been scored, the new team shall use as their baseline the rationale and scores detailed for the previously scored fishery.
 - PB1.3.4.2 To achieve harmonisation, teams shall undertake all the following:
 - a. Use of common assessment trees where appropriate.
 - b. Coordination meetings between teams.
 - c. Sharing of fishery information.
 - d. Achievement of consistent conclusions with respect to evaluation, scoring and conditions.
 - PB1.3.4.3 The team responsible for any new assessment shall consider the findings of any recent surveillance report(s) produced for overlapping certified UoAs.
 - PB1.3.4.4 If teams reach agreement on score(s) and rationale(s), the score(s) shall be adopted.
 - PB1.3.4.5 Where teams have applied the activities outlined in PB1.3.4.1 and PB1.3.4.2 and conclusions remain inconsistent with respect to evaluation, scoring and conditions, teams shall undertake the following:
 - a. Convene a harmonisation discussion.
 - i. In the event the discussion leads to agreement among teams, the agreed score(s) shall be adopted by all teams.
 - ii. In the event the discussion does not lead to agreement among teams, the lowest score(s) shall be adopted by all teams.
 - b. Change(s) shall be included in the next report (e.g. Announcement Comment Draft Report or Public Comment Draft Report) produced for any fishery in assessment and at the subsequent surveillance audit for any certified fisheries.
- PB1.3.5 Where a UoA under surveillance overlaps with a certified UoA, the team shall also coordinate assessments to make sure that key assessment products and outcomes remain harmonised.
- PB1.3.5.1 In this case, the CAB shall follow similar steps to those given in PB1.3.4.1–PB1.3.4.5 to achieve harmonisation.
- PB1.3.6 Teams shall explain and justify any difference in the scores in the scoring rationale for relevant PIs.
- PB1.3.6.1 Differences in outcomes with respect to evaluation, scoring, and conditions of the overlapping assessments shall only occur when a team has identified exceptional circumstances, such as the UoAs being demonstrably different.
 - a. Teams shall fully document exceptional circumstances, together with clear indication of agreement between teams responsible for the overlapping fisheries.

End of Annex PB

Annex PC: Fishery team leader, team member, team and peer reviewer qualifications and competencies – normative

PC1 Fishery team leader, team member, team and peer reviewer qualifications and competencies

PC1.1 Scope

PC1.1.1 This annex sets out additional requirements to the [MSC General Certification Requirements](#) (GCR) for fishery team leader, team member and team qualifications and competencies which the CAB shall verify in accordance with the GCR.

PC1.2 Fishery team leader qualification and competency criteria

Table PC1: Fishery team leader qualification and competency criteria

1. General
Qualifications
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Degree or equivalent in business, economics, science or technical subject (e.g. supply chain and logistics management, food/seafood science and fisheries science), or b. 3 years' experience in the fisheries sector related to the tasks under the responsibility of the team leader.
Verification mechanisms
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • CV. • Certificates.
2. Understanding of MSC Fisheries Standard and MSC Fisheries Certification Process
Qualifications
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Review any updates to the MSC Fisheries Program Documents at least annually.  b. Pass the MSC's fishery team leader training course at least every 5 years.  c. Pass new versions of the compulsory online training modules when new versions of the MSC Fisheries Standard or certification process are published prior to undertaking assessments against the revised MSC Fisheries Standard or certification process. d. Pass new online training modules on modifications to the MSC Fisheries Standard before undertaking assessments using these modifications such as enhanced bivalves, salmon and other modifications that may be developed in the future.
Competencies
<p>Ability to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> i. Describe the intent and requirements of the MSC Fisheries Standard. ii. Place the steps of the fisheries assessment process in the correct order. iii. Identify the steps in which stakeholder consultation occurs.

- iv. Score a fishery using the default assessment tree.
- v. Describe how conditions are set and monitored.
- vi. Describe the reporting stages, including the role of the peer reviewer.

Verification mechanisms

- Examination pass.
- Witness or office audits by an MSC-appointed accreditation body.
- CAB witness audits.

3. Assessment experience

Qualifications

- a. Have undertaken 2 MSC fishery assessment or surveillance site visits as a team member in the last 5 years.
- b. For new fishery team leaders only: have undertaken an assessment as team leader that will be witnessed by an MSC-appointed accreditation body as part of a CAB's initial accreditation audit.

Competencies

- i. Ability to apply knowledge of auditing techniques in the gathering of information, the scoring of the fishery and the rationales for the scores given.

Verification mechanisms

- CAB records.
- Previous employer reference letter.
- Witness or office audits by an MSC-appointed accreditation body.
- CAB witness audits.
- Previous audit reports.

4. Communication and stakeholder facilitation skills

Qualifications

- a. Experience in applying different types of interviewing and facilitation techniques.

Competencies

- i. Ability to communicate effectively with the client and other stakeholders.

Verification mechanisms

- CV.
- CAB records.
- Witness or office audits by an MSC-appointed accreditation body.
- CAB witness audits.

PC1.3 Fishery team member qualification and competency criteria ▣

Table PC2: Fishery team member qualification and competency criteria

1. General
Qualifications
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. University degree in fisheries, marine conservation biology, natural resources environmental management or relevant field (e.g. economics, mathematics, statistics), or b. 3 years' management or research experience in a marine conservation biology, fisheries, natural resources or environmental management position.
Verification mechanisms
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • CV. • Certificates.
2. Understanding of MSC Fisheries Standard and relevant MSC Certification Process requirements
Qualifications
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Review any updates to the MSC Fisheries Program Documents at least annually. ▣ b. Pass the MSC's fishery team member training course at least every 5 years. ▣ c. Pass new versions of the compulsory online training modules when new versions of the MSC Fisheries Standard are published prior to undertaking assessments against the new MSC Fisheries Standard. d. Pass new online training modules on modifications to the MSC Fisheries Standard before undertaking assessments using these modifications such as enhanced bivalves, salmon and other modifications that may be developed in the future.
Competencies
<p>Ability to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> i. Describe the intent and requirements of the MSC Fisheries Standard. ii. Score a fishery using the default assessment tree. iii. Describe how conditions are set and monitored.
Verification mechanisms
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Examination pass. • CAB records.

PC1.4 Fishery team qualification and competency criteria ▣

PC1.4.1 The CAB shall ensure that the fishery team collectively complies with the qualification and competency criteria listed in Table PC3.

Table PC3: Fishery team qualification and competency criteria

1. Fish stock assessment 
Qualifications
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. 3 years' or more experience of applying relevant stock assessment techniques being used by the fishery under assessment, or b. Primary authorship of 2 peer-reviewed stock assessments of a type used by the fishery under assessment.
Competencies
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> i. Ability to undertake a stock assessment using stock assessment techniques relevant to the fishery.
Verification mechanisms
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • CV with full publication list. • Employer's reference letter. • CAB witness audits.
2. Fish stock biology / ecology 
Qualifications
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. 3 years' or more experience working with the biology and population dynamics of the target species or species with similar biology.
Competencies
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> i. Demonstrate knowledge of, and ability to interpret, scientific information relating to the biological processes of the target species, or species with similar population dynamics.
Verification mechanism
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • CV with full publication list. • Employer's reference letter. • CAB witness audits.
3. Fishing impacts on aquatic ecosystems
Qualifications
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. 3 years' or more experience in research into, policy analysis for, or management of, the impact of fisheries on aquatic ecosystems including at least two of the following topics: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> i. Bycatch. ii. Endangered, threatened, or protected (ETP) species. iii. Habitats. iv. Ecosystem interactions.
Competencies

- i. Demonstrate knowledge of, and ability to interpret, scientific data relating to the impact of fisheries on at least 2 of the topics listed in a. above.

Verification mechanisms

- CV.
- Employer's reference letter.
- Witness or office audits by an MSC-appointed accreditation body.
- CAB witness audits.

4. Fishery management and operations

Qualifications

- a. 3 years' or more experience as a practising fishery manager and/or fishery/policy analyst/consultant.

Competencies

Ability to:

- i. Identify likely problems for a fishery under Principle 1 and Principle 2 that would arise from poor management.
- ii. Demonstrate a good understanding of the types of management system(s) and laws applicable to the fishery under assessment.

Verification mechanisms

- CV with full publication list.
- Employer's reference letter.
- Witness or office audits by an MSC-appointed accreditation body.
- CAB witness audits.

5. Current knowledge of the country, language and local fishery context

Qualifications

- a. Knowledge of a common language spoken by clients and stakeholders, and one of the following:
 - i. 2 years' fishery work experience in the country or in a relevant fishery in the last 15 years.
 - ii. 2 assignments in the country or region in which the fishery under assessment is based in the last 10 years.
 - iii. Primary authorship of at least 1 published paper in a journal or grey literature in the last 5 years on a fishery issue in the country or region in which the fishery under assessment is based.

Competencies

Ability to:

- i. Communicate effectively with stakeholders in the country in a common language.
- ii. Explain the geographical, cultural, and ecological context of the fishery under assessment.

Verification mechanisms

- CV.
- Employer’s reference letter.
- Journal extracts.
- Witness or office audits by an MSC-appointed accreditation body.
- CAB witness audits.

6. Understanding of the CoC Standard and CoC Certification Requirements

Qualifications

- a. Pass the MSC’s Traceability training module every 5 years.
- b. Pass new versions of the training when new traceability requirements are published prior to undertaking assessments against the new requirements.
- c. Review any updates to the traceability requirements at least annually. ■

Competencies

- i. Ability to explain the elements of traceability that are relevant to fishery assessments.

Verification mechanisms

- Examination pass.
- CAB records.
- CAB witness audits.

7. Use of the Risk-Based Framework (RBF) (when applicable)

Qualifications

- a. Pass the MSC’s RBF training course every 5 years.
- b. Pass new versions of the training when new RBF requirements are published prior to undertaking assessments against the new requirements.
- c. Review any updates to the RBF requirements at least annually. ■

Competencies

- Demonstrate an understanding of:
- i. When the RBF can be used.
 - ii. How to implement RBF components.
 - iii. How to engage stakeholders effectively when the RBF is used.
 - iv. How Performance Indicators are scored when the RBF is used.
 - v. The reporting of the RBF process and outcomes.

Verification mechanisms

- Examination pass.
- CAB witness audits.

End of Annex PC

Annex PD (Heading not used at this time)

Annex PE: Scope extensions – normative !!

PE1 Scope extensions – normative

PE1.1 Scope

PE1.1.1 The requirements of this annex shall apply to all scope extensions for the purpose of extending an existing fishery certificate.

PE1.2 Assessment process

PE1.2.1 The CAB shall upload an announcement and Announcement Comment Draft Report to the MSC database for publication on the MSC website, announcing its intent to undertake a scope extension.

PE1.2.2 The CAB shall follow FCP 7.12.2 and 7.12.3.

PE1.2.2.1 The CAB shall include the additional information in the announcement:

- a. A gap analysis, described in FCP 7.27.4, and justifications for the outcomes. 
- b. The assessment components held in common between the two fisheries.
- c. The assessment components that will be assessed in the scope extension.
- d. Justification confirming whether there are any potential implications for other Performance Indicators (PIs).

PE1.2.3 The CAB shall follow FCP 7.15 except for 7.15.1.1.

PE1.2.4 The scope extension shall be undertaken including at least the following steps.

PE1.2.4.1 The CAB shall announce at least 1 assessor who meets the criteria in Table PC2.

- a. The assessor shall also meet the criteria in Table PC3 rows 1-4 appropriate to the assessment components to be assessed.

PE1.2.4.2 The CAB shall conduct the scope extension either during an on-site assessment or during a regular on-site surveillance audit.

- a. The CAB shall inform stakeholders and the MSC, specifically identifying that the scope of the assessment or regular surveillance audit will include a scope extension of the certificate to include another fishery.
 - i. The CAB shall identify in the notification which assessment components will be assessed in the scope extension.

PE1.2.4.3 The CAB shall evaluate the assessment components using all requirements in [MSC Fisheries Standard Annex SA2](#) following the process as described in FCP 7.9, 7.17 and 7.18. !!

- a. If the stock under assessment overlaps with another fishery or fisheries, the harmonisation steps in Annex PB shall be followed.
- b. If there are any changes in the other assessment components, the relevant PI shall be re-scored.

PE1.2.4.4 The CAB shall complete the scope extension in compliance with timelines as set out in FCP 7.13.1, and 7.22.1.

PE1.3 Reporting

- PE1.3.1 The CAB shall produce the following reports using the appropriate templates and follow procedures outlined in FCP Sections 7.10, 7.14, and 7.19–7.24:
- a. Announcement Comment Draft Report.
 - b. Client and Peer Review Draft Report.
 - c. Public Comment Draft Report.
 - d. Final Draft Report.
 - e. Public Certification Report.
- PE1.3.2 When the scope extension is taking place during a regular surveillance audit for the certified fishery, the CAB shall produce a separate report for the scope extension, according to FCP Sections 7.19–7.24.
- PE1.3.3 Where appropriate, the CAB shall populate sections of the 'MSC Reporting Template' from the previous Public Certification Report.
- PE1.3.4 The minimum number of peer reviewers for scope extensions shall be 1.
- PE1.3.5 All other requirements for peer review in FCP Sections 7.14, 7.19.3–7.19.5 and 7.20.10 shall apply.

PE1.4 Certification decision and certificate issue

- PE1.4.1 The CAB shall make a determination regarding the scope extension assessment outcome and inform stakeholders of the Final Draft Report.
- PE1.4.2 The CAB shall follow the [MSC Disputes Process](#).
- PE1.4.3 If it is determined that the scores from the assessed PIs in combination with the scores obtained for the commonly held components with the existing certificate meet the requirements for certification, the CAB shall:
- a. Include the new Unit of Assessment within the scope of the existing valid fishery certificate.
 - b. Follow the requirements on certification decision and certification issue in FCP Section 7.25.
- PE1.4.4 If the determination is that the fishery has not met the requirements for certification, the CAB shall report this in the Final Draft Report and Public Certification Report and shall make no changes to the existing certificate's scope, which shall remain valid.

End of Annex PE

Annex PF: Risk-Based Framework – normative

PF1 Introduction to the Risk-Based Framework (RBF) ☐

PF1.1 Applying the RBF in scoring different PIs !!

PF1.1.1 There are 4 methodologies within the RBF: ☐

- a. Consequence Analysis (CA).
- b. Productivity Susceptibility Analysis (PSA).
- c. Consequence Spatial Analysis (CSA).
- d. Scale Intensity Consequence Analysis (SICA).

PF1.1.2 The team shall verify that they can trigger the RBF for a particular scoring element within a PI, using Table 3, and shall identify any implications for other PIs using Figure PF1 and Table PF1 prior to proceeding. ☐

Figure PF1: How to apply the RBF in scoring

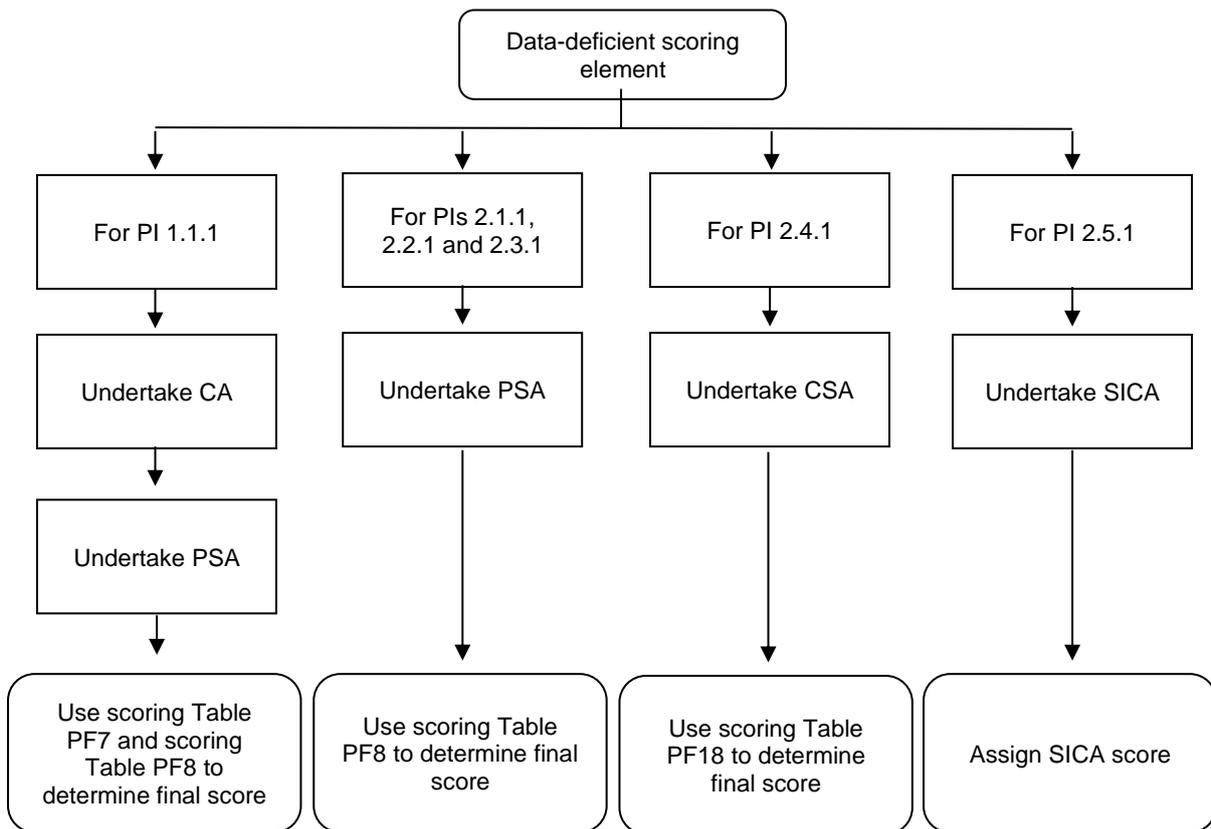


Table PF1: RBF methodologies PIs and implications for non-RBF PIs

PI	RBF	Notes
1.1.1 Stock status	Yes	CA and PSA shall both be undertaken if scoring using the RBF.
1.1.2 Stock rebuilding	No	If the RBF is used to score PI 1.1.1, this PI is not scored.
1.2.1 Harvest strategy	No	Score as normal.
1.2.2 Harvest control rules and tools	No	Score as normal.
1.2.3 Information/monitoring	No	Score as normal.
1.2.4 Assessment of stock status	No	If RBF is used to score PI 1.1.1, a default score of 80 shall be awarded to this PI.
2.1.1 Primary species outcome	Yes	PSA alone shall be undertaken if using the RBF.
2.1.2 Primary species management strategy	No	Score as normal.
2.1.3 Primary species information	No	If the RBF is used to score PI 2.1.1, use the RBF alternative within scoring issue (a).
2.2.1 Secondary species outcome	Yes	PSA alone shall be undertaken if using the RBF.
2.2.2 Secondary species management strategy	No	Score as normal.
2.2.3 Secondary species information	No	If the RBF is used to score PI 2.2.1, use the RBF alternative within scoring issue (a).
2.3.1 ETP Species outcome	Yes	PSA alone shall be undertaken if using the RBF.
2.3.2 ETP Species management strategy	No	Score as normal.
2.3.3 ETP Species information	No	If the RBF is used to score PI 2.3.1, use the RBF alternative within scoring issue (a).
2.4.1 Habitats outcome	Yes	CSA alone shall be undertaken if using the RBF.
2.4.2 Habitats management strategy	No	Score as normal.
2.4.3 Habitats information	No	If the RBF is used to score PI 2.4.1, use the RBF alternative within scoring issues (a) and (b).

PI	RBF	Notes
2.5.1 Ecosystem outcome	Yes	SICA alone shall be undertaken if using the RBF.
2.5.2 Ecosystem management strategy	No	Score as normal.
2.5.3 Ecosystem information	No	Score as normal.
Principle 3 PIs	No	The RBF shall not be used to score any PIs within Principle 3.

PF2 Stakeholder involvement in RBF

PF2.1 Announcing the RBF !!

- PF2.1.1 If the team determines that the RBF is to be used, the team shall:
- Describe and justify the use of the RBF using the form 'Use of the RBF in a Fishery Assessment Form'.
 - Upload the form to the MSC database for publication on the MSC website.
 - Inform stakeholders of the proposal to use the RBF.
 - Allow at least 30 days for comment.
 - Consider all stakeholder input, recording why each comment has been accepted or rejected.
 - Review the decision to use the RBF (in light of those comments).
 - Inform the MSC if a decision is made not to use the RBF for any PI for which it was previously announced.
 - Repeat steps PF2.1.1.a-g if the team determines that the RBF is to be used for PIs not previously announced.

PF2.2 Information gathering

- PF2.2.1 Prior to the site visit, the team shall gather information needed for scoring including:
- Management arrangements in place together with any specific strategies, such as bycatch mitigation or recovery strategies. 
 - Descriptions of any monitoring strategies in place, including at-sea observer programmes (coverage, duration, objectives).
 - Maps of:
 - The distribution of fishing effort within the jurisdictional boundaries of the fishery.
 - The distribution of all fishing effort on the target stock outside the fishery being certified.
 - Species, habitat and community distributions (including depth ranges).
 - When using the CA, information needed to:
 - Assist in identifying the most vulnerable subcomponent for a species.
 - Score the consequence of fishing activity on the species.
 - When using the PSA, information needed for scoring:

- i. The productivity attributes of each species.
 - ii. The susceptibility attributes of the species.
 - f. When using the CSA, information needed to:
 - i. Define habitat(s)
 - ii. Score the consequence attributes of the Unit of Assessment's (UoA) habitat(s)
 - iii. Score the spatial attributes of the UoA's habitat(s).
 - g. When using the SICA, information needed for scoring:
 - i. The spatial scale of the fishery on the ecosystem
 - ii. The temporal scale of the fishery on the ecosystem.
 - iii. The intensity of the fishery on the ecosystem
 - iv. The consequence of the activity on the ecosystem.
- PF2.2.2 The information shall be used to inform the RBF stakeholder meeting(s) and should be made available to attendees where possible. Information can also be collected during the site visit, and post-site visit as necessary.
- PF2.2.3 The team shall use all the data available as part of the assessment and reflect the analysis of this information when scoring the fishery.

PF2.3 Stakeholder consultation

- PF2.3.1 The team shall carry out a stakeholder consultation process to gather data and to seek expert opinions, see FCP Section 7.12.
- PF2.3.2 The CAB shall inform stakeholders of the use of the RBF in the fishery assessment by including in communication, as a minimum, text equivalent to the following:
 - a. "A key purpose of the site visit is to collect information and speak to stakeholders with an interest in the fishery. For those parts of the assessment involving the MSC's Risk-Based Framework (RBF, see msc.org), we will be using a stakeholder-driven, qualitative and semi-quantitative analysis during the site visit. To achieve a robust outcome from this consultative approach, we rely heavily on participation of a broad range of stakeholders with a balance of knowledge of the fishery. We encourage any stakeholders with experience or knowledge of the fishery to participate in these meetings."
- PF2.3.3 The team shall plan the stakeholder consultation strategy to ensure effective participation from a range of stakeholders.
- PF2.3.3.1 A range of stakeholder groups shall be consulted. !!
 - PF2.3.3.2 Stakeholders shall be identified early in the assessment process. !!
 - PF2.3.3.3 Meetings shall be organised to allow for the highest participation of stakeholders.
 - ☐
 - PF2.3.3.4 Meetings shall be structured to encourage engagement amongst stakeholders. ☐
 - PF2.3.3.5 Where different language groups, educational/vocabulary levels or cultural behaviours are present, the team shall consider separate consultations tailored to those specific interest groups. ☐
 - PF2.3.3.6 Stakeholder consultation shall be conducted in a language that can be understood by all stakeholders. ☐
 - a. Any materials required for the stakeholder consultation shall be prepared in language understood by all participants.
 - PF2.3.3.7 Background information shall be made available on the fishery ahead of the meeting so that the stakeholder consultation process is focused on providing

information required for the RBF scoring process, while allowing participants to express their expert opinions. ■

- PF2.3.3.8 Participatory tools shall be used, where appropriate, to increase the effectiveness of the consultation. ■
- PF2.3.4 The information gathered during stakeholder consultation(s) shall be used to inform the scoring of the CA, PSA, CSA and SICA.
- PF2.3.5 The team shall be responsible for scoring PIs. ❗

PF3 Conducting a Consequence Analysis (CA)

PF3.1 Preparation

- PF3.1.1 The team shall conduct a CA for each data-deficient scoring element identified under PI 1.1.1 (target species). ❗
- PF3.1.2 A CA shall only be conducted where some qualitative or quantitative data exist from which trends in 1 or more of the 4 key consequence subcomponents listed in Table PF2 can be identified.
- PF3.1.2.1 Where there is no indicator data as defined in PF3.1.2, the fishery cannot be assessed against the [MSC Fisheries Standard](#). ■
- PF3.1.3 The team shall use the CA scoring template in Table PF2, reproduced in the 'MSC Reporting Template' to present the scores and justifications of the CA.

PF3.2 Stakeholder involvement within CA ■

- PF3.2.1 The team shall use input from stakeholders to:
- Provide information suitable for the semi-quantitative evaluation of the risks that the fishing activity poses to the species included in the risk assessment.
 - Assist in identifying the most vulnerable subcomponent for a species.
 - Assist in scoring the consequence of fishing for a species.

Table PF2: CA scoring template

Principle 1: Stock status outcome	Scoring element	Consequence subcomponents	Consequence score
		Population size	
		Reproductive capacity	
		Age/size/sex structure	
		Geographic range	
Justification for most vulnerable subcomponent			
Justification for consequence score			

PF3.3 Determine the CA score

- PF3.3.1 Scoring shall be undertaken only for the subcomponent (population size, reproductive capacity, age/size/sex structure or geographic range) on which the team decides that the fishing activity is having the most impact.
- PF3.3.2 Using Table PF3, the team shall draw on indicator and trend data and use this data in working with stakeholders at the CA consultation meeting(s) to assign a score for the consequence of the fishing activity on the subcomponent on which the fishery is having the most impact. ❗
- PF3.3.3 The team shall interpret the terms “insignificant change”, “possible detectable change” and “detectable change” as follows:
- “Insignificant change” shall mean that changes in the subcomponents are undetectable or if detectable, these are of such a low magnitude that the impact of the fishing activity cannot be differentiated from the natural variability for this population.
 - “Possible detectable change” shall mean that changes are detected and can be reasonably attributable to the fishing activity, but these are of such a low magnitude that the impact of the fishery is considered to be minimal on the population size and dynamics.
 - “Detectable change” shall mean that changes to the subcomponent can be attributed to the fishing activity and changes are of such magnitude that cannot be considered as minimal.
- PF3.3.4 Where there is no agreement between stakeholders, the team shall use the consequence category with the lowest score (60, 80 or 100).
- PF3.3.5 The team shall fail the fishery if the consequence of the activity is determined to be at higher risk than 60 level in Table .
- PF3.3.6 The team shall take the final CA score into Section PF5.

Table PF3: CA scoring of subcomponents

Subcomponent	Consequence category			
	Fail	60	80	100
Population size	Consequence is higher-risk than 60 level.	Full exploitation rate but long-term recruitment dynamics not adversely damaged.	Possible detectable change in size/growth rate (r) but minimal impact on population size and none on dynamics.	Insignificant change to population size/growth rate (r). Change is unlikely to be detectable against natural variability for this population.
Reproductive capacity		Detectable change in reproductive capacity. Impact on population dynamics at maximum sustainable level, long-term recruitment dynamics not adversely affected.	Possible detectable change in reproductive capacity but minimal impact on population dynamics.	Insignificant change in reproductive capacity. Unlikely to be detectable against natural variability for this population.
Age/size/sex structure		Detectable change in age/size/sex structure. Impact on	Possible detectable change in age/size/sex structure	Insignificant change in age/size/sex structure. Unlikely to

Consequence category				
		population dynamics at maximum sustainable level, long-term recruitment dynamics not adversely affected.	but minimal impact on population dynamics.	be detectable against natural variability for this population.
Geographic range		Detectable change in geographic range up to 10% of original distribution due to fishing activities.	Possible detectable change in geographic range but minimal impact on population distribution and none on dynamics.	Insignificant change in geographic range. Unlikely to be detectable against natural variability for this population.

PF4 Conducting a Productivity Susceptibility Analysis (PSA)

PF4.1 Preparation

- PF4.1.1 The team shall use the 'MSC RBF Worksheets' to calculate PSA scores.
- PF4.1.2 The scores and justifications for each PSA attribute shall be documented in the PSA justification tables in the 'MSC Reporting Template'.
- PF4.1.3 The team shall conduct a PSA for each data-deficient scoring element identified within a given PI, unless the options in PF4.1.4 or PF4.1.5 are chosen.
- PF4.1.4 The team may elect to conduct a PSA on "main" species only when evaluating PI 2.1.1 or 2.2.1. ■
- PF4.1.4.1 If the team decides to consider "main" species only, final PI score shall be adjusted downward in accordance with clause PF5.3.2.
- PF4.1.5 When assessing a large number of species under PI 2.1.1 or 2.2.1, the team may elect to group species according to similar taxonomies and undertake a reduced number of PSAs. If the team decides to group species, it shall: ■
- a. List all species and group them according to similar taxonomy. !!
 - b. Within each taxonomic group, identify at least the 2 most at-risk species determined by: !!
 - i. Selecting the species with the highest risk score when scoring the productivity part of the PSA for all species, and
 - ii. Working with stakeholders to identify qualitatively which species are most at risk within each group.
- PF4.1.5.1 If there are several species that appear to have a similar level of risk and the team and majority of stakeholders cannot agree on which 1 is most at risk for a given PI, the team shall conduct a PSA on all species.
- PF4.1.5.2 The process of grouping species and choosing the species most at risk within each group shall be well documented and the choice justified in the assessment documentation.
- PF4.1.5.3 The representative most at-risk species shall be included in the PSA and will determine the score for the species group. !!
- PF4.1.5.4 If the team decides to group species according to similar taxonomies, the final PI score shall be adjusted downwards according to clause PF5.3.2. ■

PF4.2 Stakeholder involvement within the PSA

- PF4.2.1 The team shall use input from stakeholders to:
- Assist in the identification of species that are affected by the UoA.
 - Assist in the scoring of the susceptibility attributes within the PSA.

PF4.3 PSA Step 1: Score the productivity attributes

- PF4.3.1 The team shall score the productivity of each data-deficient scoring element. !!
- PF4.3.2 The team shall score each productivity attribute on a three-point risk scale: low (3), medium (2) or high (1), using the cut-offs in Table PF4. ■
- PF4.3.2.1 The average maximum size and average size at maturity attributes shall be scored in vertebrate species only.
 - PF4.3.2.2 The density-dependence attribute shall be scored in invertebrate species only.
 - PF4.3.2.3 The team shall enter the 3-point scores into the 'MSC RBF Worksheets' to calculate the overall productivity score.
 - PF4.3.2.4 Where there is limited information available for a productivity attribute, the more precautionary score shall be awarded.

Table PF4: PSA productivity attributes and scores ■

Productivity attribute	High productivity (Low risk, score = 1)	Medium productivity (medium risk, score = 2)	Low productivity (high risk, score = 3)
Average age at maturity	<5 years	5-15 years	>15 years
Average maximum age	<10 years	10-25 years	>25 years
Fecundity	>20,000 eggs per year	100-20,000 eggs per year	<100 eggs per year
Average maximum size (not to be used when scoring invertebrate species)	<100 cm	100-300 cm	>300 cm
Average size at maturity (not to be used when scoring invertebrate species)	<40 cm	40-200 cm	>200 cm
Reproductive strategy	Broadcast spawner	Demersal egg layer	Live bearer
Trophic Level	<2.75	2.75-3.25	>3.25

Productivity attribute	High productivity (Low risk, score = 1)	Medium productivity (medium risk, score = 2)	Low productivity (high risk, score = 3)
Density dependence !! (to be used when scoring invertebrate species only)	Compensatory dynamics at low population size demonstrated or likely.	No depensatory or compensatory dynamics demonstrated or likely.	Depensatory dynamics at low population sizes (Allee effects) demonstrated or likely.

PF4.4 PSA Step 2: Score the susceptibility attributes

PF4.4.1 The team shall score the susceptibility of each data-deficient scoring element. !!

PF4.4.2 The team shall score 4 susceptibility attributes (areal overlap (availability), encounterability, selectivity and post-capture mortality) on a 3-point risk scale: high (3), medium (2) or low (1), using the cut-offs in Table PF5.

PF4.4.2.1 The team shall enter the 3-point scores into the 'MSC RBF Worksheets' to calculate the overall susceptibility score.

PF4.4.2.2 Where there is limited information available to score a susceptibility attribute, the more precautionary score shall be awarded.

PF4.4.3 When scoring susceptibility, the team shall take into account the impacts of fisheries other than the UoA according to the following requirements:

- a. When scoring PI 1.1.1, all fisheries affecting the given target stock shall be identified and listed separately.
- b. When scoring PI 2.1.1, all MSC UoAs affecting each main primary species shall be identified and listed separately.
- c. When scoring PI 2.2.1, if the UoA has main species with catches at 10% or more of the total catch by weight of the UoA, all MSC UoAs having a catch of the same species that is 10% or more of the total catch of the UoAs shall be identified and listed separately.
- d. If the UoA does not have main species with catches at 10% or more of the total catch by weight of the UoA, the team may elect to conduct the PSA on the UoA only.
- e. When scoring PI 2.3.1, only the UoA shall be taken into account.

Table PF5: PSA susceptibility attributes and scores

Susceptibility attribute	Low susceptibility (Low risk, score = 1)	Medium susceptibility (medium risk, score = 2)	High susceptibility (high risk, score = 3)
Areal overlap (availability): Overlap of the fishing effort with a species concentration of the stock	<10% overlap	10-30% overlap	>30% overlap

<p>Encounterability: The position of the stock/species within the water column relative to the fishing gear, and the position of the stock/species within the habitat relative to the position of the gear</p>	<p>Low overlap with fishing gear (low encounterability).</p>		<p>Medium overlap with fishing gear.</p>		<p>High overlap with fishing gear (high encounterability).</p> <p>Default score for target species (Principle 1).</p>	
<p>Selectivity of gear type: Potential of the gear to retain species</p>	a	<p>Individuals < size at maturity are rarely caught.</p>	a	<p>Individuals < size at maturity are regularly caught.</p>	a	<p>Individuals < size at maturity are frequently caught.</p>
	b	<p>Individuals < size at maturity can escape or avoid gear.</p>	b	<p>Individuals < half the size at maturity can escape or avoid gear.</p>	b	<p>Individuals < half the size at maturity are retained by gear.</p>
<p>Post-capture mortality (PCM): The chance that, if captured, a species would be released and that it would be in a condition permitting subsequent survival</p>	<p>Evidence of majority released post-capture and survival.</p>		<p>Evidence of some released post-capture and survival.</p>		<p>Retained species or majority dead when released.</p> <p>Default score for retained species (Principle 1 or Principle 2).</p>	

PF4.4.4 Where the impacts of fisheries other than the UoA are taken into account each fishery affecting the given stock shall be identified and listed separately. ■

PF4.4.4.1 To account for impact of other fisheries on a given stock the team shall determine the contribution of each fishery on the total catch of the given stock.

- a. If precise catch data are available, weights for each fishery shall be assigned according to known proportions of total catch of the given stock. ■
- b. If catch data are not available, a qualitative information-gathering process shall be used and documented to apply a weight to each fishery according to Table PF6. ■

PF4.4.5 A weighted average of PSA scores for each fishery affecting the given stock shall be calculated in order to derive the final overall PSA score except in the following case: ■

- a. If catch data cannot be estimated for a particular fishery (gear type) using either qualitative or quantitative data, the susceptibility score for the overall PSA shall be based on the attributes of the gear with the highest susceptibility score.

Table PF6: Weighting of fisheries

% contribution of catch	Weighting score
0–25	1
25–50	2
50–75	3
75–100	4

PF4.4.6 The team shall score areal overlap (availability) as follows: !!

- a. The team shall generate areal overlap scores after consideration of the overlap of the fishing effort with the distribution of the stock.
- b. Where the impacts of fisheries other than the UoA are taken into account, the areal overlap shall be scored as the combined overlap of all listed fisheries with the areal concentration of a stock.
- c. The resulting areal overlap risk scores shall be entered into those cells in the 'MSC RBF Worksheets' for all listed fisheries.
- d. The scoring of areal overlap shall consider the concentration of species and the overlap of the fishing gear with the concentration species. ■
- e. For species with good distribution maps, availability areal overlap shall be scored using detailed mapping analysis: the amount of overlap between fishing effort and species stock distribution.
- f. For species without good distribution maps, stakeholder-generated maps may be used.

PF4.4.7 The team shall score encounterability as follows: !!

- a. The team shall generate encounterability scores after consideration of the likelihood that a species will encounter fishing gear that is deployed within the geographic range of that species.
- b. Where the impacts of fisheries other than the UoA are taken into account, encounterability shall be scored as the combined encounterability of all listed fisheries.
- c. The resulting encounterability risk scores shall be entered into those cells in the 'MSC RBF Worksheets' for all listed fisheries.
- d. The scoring of encounterability shall consider the concentration of species and the overlap of the fishing gear with the concentration species.
- e. The deployment of fishing gear in relation to the adult habitat of each species is the main aspect to be considered for each species.

PF4.4.8 The team shall score selectivity as follows: !!

- a. The team shall generate a selectivity score for each gear type within the UoA after consideration of the potential of gear to capture or retain the species that encounters the fishing gear.
- b. The selectivity risk scores for each combination of gear type and species within the UoA shall be determined individually and entered into the 'MSC RBF Worksheets'.
- c. Scores for gear selectivity shall be assigned using the 2 categories specified in Table PF5. ■

- i. Where elements (a) and (b) indicate different risk scores, the team shall assign a score as the average of the 2 categories, rounded up to the nearest whole number on the 1:3 scale.
- d. Terms “rarely”, “regularly” and “frequently” in Table shall be interpreted as follows:
 - i. “Rarely” means that the capture of individuals smaller than the size at maturity occurs in less than 5% few gear deployments.
 - ii. “Regularly” means that the capture of individuals smaller than the size at maturity occurs in 5% to 50% of the gear deployments.
 - iii. “Frequently” means that the capture of individuals smaller than the size at maturity occurs in more than 50% of gear deployments.

PF4.4.9 The team shall score PCM as follows:

- a. The team shall use its knowledge of species biology and fishing practice together with independent field observations to assess the chance that, if captured, a species would be released and that it would be in a condition to permit subsequent survival. !!
- b. The PCM risk scores for each combination of gear type and species within the UoA shall be determined individually, and entered into the ‘MSC RBF Worksheets’.
- c. In the absence of observer data or other verified field observations made during commercial fishing operations that indicate the individuals are released alive and post-release survivorship is high, the default value for the PCM of all species shall be high risk.
- d. The team may reduce the PCM score from the default score in situations where:
 - i. A high score has been allocated for the selectivity, and
 - ii. A large portion of animals are returned alive and survive the encounter.

PF4.4.10 The team may adjust the susceptibility scores if additional information regarding an attribute that justifies a change in score is available and the source of data is appropriate to the fishery(ies) or region(s). ■

PF4.4.10.1 The team shall record the justification for all changes made.

PF4.5 PSA Step 3: Determine the PSA score and equivalent MSC score

PF4.5.1 The team shall use the ‘MSC RBF Worksheets’ to calculate the overall productivity and susceptibility risk scores (PSA score) and the equivalent MSC scores for each scoring element. ■

PF5 Scoring the fishery using the RBF for Species Performance Indicators (PIs 1.1.1, 2.1.1, 2.2.1 and 2.3.1)

PF5.1 Scoring species PIs

PF5.1.1 When scoring PI 1.1.1, both the CA and PSA shall be used to produce an overall score for each scoring element.

PF5.1.1.1 The overall score for the scoring element shall be assigned according to the rules in Table . ■

Table PF7: Rules for use of CA and PSA scores

CA	PSA	Rule
80 or 100	≥80	Score awarded shall be at the midway point between CA and PSA scores.
80 or 100	≥60 and <80	Score awarded for PI shall be less than 80, as near to the midway point between CA and PSA scores as possible.
80 or 100	<60	Fail
60	≥80	Score awarded for PI shall be less than 80, as near to the midway point between CA and PSA scores as possible.
60	≥60 and <80	Score awarded for PI shall be at the midway point between CA and PSA scores.
60	<60	Fail
<60	≥80	Fail
<60	≥60 and <80	Fail
<60	<60	Fail

PF5.1.2 When scoring PIs 2.1.1, 2.2.1 and 2.3.1, the PSA alone shall be used to produce an overall score for each scoring element.

PF5.2 Combining scoring elements

PF5.2.1 In cases where there is only 1 scoring element for the PI, the team shall consider this as the overall MSC score.

PF5.2.2 In cases where there is a combination of both data-deficient (RBF) and species scored using default tree, the team shall consider all scoring elements for this PI to derive a final MSC score by using Table .

Table PF8: Combining multiple species scores

MSC score	Requirement to gain score
None	Any scoring elements within a PI that fail to reach a score of 60 represent a failure against the MSC Fisheries Standard and no score shall be assigned.
60	All elements have a score of 60, and only 60.
65	All elements score at least 60; a few achieve higher scores, approaching or exceeding 80, but most do not reach 80.
70	All elements score at least 60; some achieve higher scores, approaching or exceeding 80; but some fail to achieve 80 and require intervention action.
75	All elements score at least 60; most achieve higher scores, approaching or exceeding 80; only a few fail to achieve 80 and require intervention action.

MSC score	Requirement to gain score
80	All elements score 80.
85	All elements score at least 80; a few achieve higher scores, but most do not approach 100.
90	All elements score at least 80; some achieve higher scores approaching 100, but some do not.
95	All elements score at least 80; most achieve higher scores approaching 100; only a few fail to score at or very close to 100.
100	All elements score 100.

PF5.3 Adjusting PI scores

- PF5.3.1 Where no additional information exists to bring to bear on the PI, the team shall apply the score directly to the PI with the accompanying scoring template and a rationale provided as justification.
- PF5.3.1.1 If there is additional information that justifies modifying the MSC score either upwards or downwards by a maximum of 10 points, such information shall be used to reach the final MSC score for the PI. ■
- The team shall use all information that is available on the UoA to inform the assessment.
 - The team shall provide the justification for any score modification.
- PF5.3.2 The final PI score shall be capped by the team in cases where only a subset of the total number of species has been evaluated.
- PF5.3.2.1 If the team has only considered “main” species in the PSA analysis, the final PI score shall not be greater than 80.
- PF5.3.2.2 If the team has opted to use the species-grouping option, the final PI score shall not be greater than 80.
- PF5.3.3 The CA, PSA scores (equivalent MSC score) and overall MSC scores shall be recorded in the Scoring Tables in the ‘MSC Reporting Template’.

PF6 Setting conditions using the RBF for Species PIs

PF6.1 PIs 1.1.1, 2.1.1, 2.2.1 and 2.3.1

- PF6.1.1 Where any scoring element score is less than 80 the team shall set a condition on that PI.
- PF6.1.2 If a condition is triggered when assessing a PI using the CA or PSA, the team shall make sure that the Client Action Plan proposed by the fishery is capable of raising the score to 80, addressing all the scoring elements for which the score falls below 80, and without causing additional associated problems for other species. ■
- PF6.1.3 If the action plan is not capable of raising the CA or PSA score to 80 within a suitable timeframe, the team shall not allow a fishery to use the RBF for this species in subsequent MSC assessments. ■
- PF6.1.3.1 In such cases, the team shall raise a condition on the PI that there shall be information collected and analysis completed when there is a direct measure of stock status that can be compared with biologically-based reference points by the time of reassessment.

PF7 Conducting a Consequence Spatial Analysis (CSA) ☐

PF7.1 Preparation

- PF7.1.1 The team shall use the 'MSC RBF Worksheets' to calculate CSA scores.
- PF7.1.2 The scores and justifications for each scoring element (habitat) shall be documented in the CSA justification tables in the 'MSC Reporting Template'.
- PF7.1.3 The team shall use the CSA to score the outcome PI 2.4.1 when the available information is not adequate to score the default assessment tree. ☐
- PF7.1.4 The team shall conduct the CSA for each data-deficient scoring element.
- PF7.1.5 The team may elect to conduct the CSA on "main" habitats only. ☐
- PF7.1.5.1 If the team decides to consider "main" habitats only, the final PI score shall be adjusted downward according to clause PF7.6.4.
- PF7.1.6 Expert judgement shall be applied throughout the CSA.
- PF7.1.7 When scoring, the team shall consider the full range of possible interactions, and a precautionary approach shall be taken, scoring the highest possible risk score of the relevant ranges, if: ☐
- a. Possible scores from fishing activity or impact cut across more than 1 threshold range or more than 1 proxy range.
 - b. Gear has been modified in a way that could increase its impact.

PF7.2 Stakeholder involvement within the CSA ☐

- PF7.2.1 The team shall use input from stakeholders to:
- a. Assist in the identification of the habitat(s) that are affected by the UoA.
 - b. Assist in the scoring of the consequence and spatial attributes within the CSA.
- PF7.2.2 The team shall be responsible for scoring the PI.
- PF7.2.2.1 Stakeholders do not have to reach consensus.

PF7.3 CSA Step 1: Define the habitat(s)

- PF7.3.1 The team shall list and define each habitat associated with the "managed area" (i.e. each habitat in the full area managed by the governance body(s) responsible for fisheries management in the area(s) where the UoA operates). ☐
- PF7.3.1.1 [MSC Fisheries Standard Annex SA3.13.5](#) and the subclauses shall apply here.
- PF7.3.1.2 Each habitat within the UoA shall be treated as a scoring element.
- PF7.3.2 Habitats in the UoA shall be categorised on the basis of their substratum, geomorphology, and (characteristic) biota (SGB) characteristics (Table PF9). For example, 1 habitat may be defined as "Medium-Outcrop-Large erect".
- PF7.3.3 The biome, sub-biome, and feature shall also be listed (Table PF10). ☐

Table PF9: SGB habitat nomenclature (modified from Williams et al., 2011¹)

Substratum	Geomorphology	Biota
<p>Fine (mud, sand)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mud (0.1 mm) • Fine sediments(0.1-1 mm) • Coarse sediments (1-4 mm) 	<p>Flat</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Simple surface structure • Unrippled/flat • Current rippled/directed scour • Wave rippled 	<p>Large erect</p> <p>Dominated by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Large and/or erect sponges • Solitary large sponges • Solitary sedentary/sessile epifauna (e.g. ascidians/ bryozoans) • Crinoids • Corals • Mixed large or erect communities
<p>Medium</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Gravel/pebble (4-60 mm) 	<p>Low relief</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Irregular topography with mounds and depressions • Rough surface structure • Debris flow/rubble banks 	<p>Small erect/ encrusting/burrowing</p> <p>Dominated by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Small, low-encrusting sponges • Small, low-standing sponges • Consolidated (e.g. mussels) and unconsolidated bivalve beds (e.g. scallops) • Mixed small/low-encrusting invertebrate communities • Infaunal bioturbators
<p>Large</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cobble/boulders (60 mm - 3 m) • Igneous, metamorphic, or sedimentary bedrock (>3 m) 	<p>Outcrop</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Subcrop (rock protrusions from surrounding sediment <1 m) • Low-relief outcrop (<1 m) 	<p>No fauna or flora</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No apparent epifauna, infauna, or flora
<p>Solid reef of biogenic origin</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Biogenic (substratum of biogenic calcium carbonate) • Depositions of skeletal material forming coral reef base 	<p>High relief</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • High outcrop (protrusion of consolidated substrate >1 m) • Rugged surface structure 	<p>Flora</p> <p>Dominated by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Seagrass species

¹ Williams, A., Dowdney, J., Smith, A.D.M., Hobday, A.J., and Fuller, M. (2011). Evaluating impacts of fishing on benthic habitats: A risk assessment framework applied to Australian fisheries. Fisheries Research 112(3):154-167.

Table PF10: List of example biomes, sub-biomes, and features (modified from Williams et al., 2011)

Biome	Sub-biome	Feature
Coast (0-25 m) Shelf (25-200 m) Slope (200-2,000 m) Abyss (>2,000 m)	Coastal margin (<25 m) Inner shelf (25-100 m) Outer shelf (100-200 m) Upper slope (200-700 m) Mid-slope (700-1,500 m)	Seamounts Canyons Abyss Shelf break (~150-300 m) Sediment plains Sediment terraces Escarpments Plains of scattered reef Large rocky banks

PF7.4 CSA Step 2: Score the consequence attributes (Table PF11)

Table PF11: Consequence attributes (modified from Williams et al., 2011)

Habitat-productivity attributes	Gear-habitat interaction attributes
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Regeneration of biota 2. Natural disturbance 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Removability of biota 2. Removability of substratum 3. Substratum hardness 4. Substratum ruggedness 5. Seabed slope

Regeneration of biota

- PF7.4.1 This attribute shall be scored on the basis of the rate of the recovery of biota associated with the habitat using information on age, growth, and recolonisation of biota where available (Table PF12). 
- PF7.4.2 Where information on age, growth, and recolonisation of associated biota is not available for the UoA, reference shall be made to comparable data from studies elsewhere. In the absence of such comparable studies, the proxies in Table PF12 shall be used as a surrogate for accumulation and recovery time. 
- PF7.4.3 Record the “regeneration of biota” score for each habitat in the ‘MSC RBF Worksheets’.

Table PF12: Scoring regeneration of biota based on age, growth, and recolonisation of biota (modified from Williams et al., 2011)

Sub-biome	Using available data			Using surrogate when data are not available					
	Annual	Less than decadal	More than decadal	No epifauna	Small erect/ encrusting	Large erect (sponges)	Large erect (ascidians and bryozoans)	Seagrass communities/ mixed faunal communities/ hard corals	Crinoids/ solitary/mixed communities/ hard and soft corals
Coastal margin (<25 m)	1	2	3	1	1	1	1	2	1
Inner shelf (25-100 m)	1	2	3	1	1	2	2	2	2
Outer shelf (100-200 m)	1	2	3	1	1	3	2	3	3
Upper slope (200-700 m)	1	2	3	1	1	3	3	3	3
Mid-slope (700-1,500 m)	1	2	3	1	2	3	3	3	3

Natural disturbance

- PF7.4.4 This attribute shall be scored on the basis of the natural disturbance that is assumed to occur at the particular depth zone in which the habitat and fishing activity occurs (Table PF13). ▣
- PF7.4.5 Where information on disturbance is unavailable, proxies shall be used as outlined in Table PF13. ▣
- PF7.4.6 Record the “natural disturbance” score for each habitat in the ‘MSC RBF Worksheets’. ▣

Table PF13: Scoring natural disturbance (modified from Williams et al., 2011)

Attribute	Score		
	1	2	3
Natural disturbance	Regular or severe natural disturbance	Irregular or moderate natural disturbance	No natural disturbance
Natural disturbance (in absence of information)	Coastal margin and shallow inner shelf (<60 m)	Deep inner shelf and outer shelf (60-200 m)	Slope (>200 m)

- PF7.4.7 Table PF14 and Table PF15 shall be used to score the gear-habitat interaction attributes. ▣
- PF7.4.7.1 If the UoA’s gear type is not provided in Table PF14 and Table PF15, the team shall score the attributes using the most similar gear in terms of extent of bottom contact that is provided.
- The team shall be precautionary when determining the most similar gear type.
 - The team shall provide justification for the selection of the most similar gear type.

Removability of biota

- PF7.4.8 This attribute shall be scored on the basis of the likelihood of attached biota being removed or killed by interactions with fishing gear (Table PF14). ▣
- PF7.4.9 This attribute shall also consider the removability and mortality of structure-forming epibiota and bioturbating infauna.
- PF7.4.10 Record the “removability of biota” score for each habitat in the ‘MSC RBF Worksheets’.

Removability of substratum

- PF7.4.11 This attribute shall be scored on the basis of clast (rock fragment or grain resulting from the breakdown of larger rocks) size and likelihood of the substratum being moved (Table PF14).
- PF7.4.12 Scoring of this attribute shall consider the gear type being assessed.
- PF7.4.13 Record the “removability of substratum” score for each habitat in the ‘MSC RBF Worksheets’.

Table PF14: Scoring the removability of biota and removability of substratum attributes (modified from Hobday et al., 2007²)

Gear type	Removability of biota			Removability of substratum		
	Low, robust, small (<5 cm), smooth, or flexible biota OR robust, deep-burrowing biota	Erect, medium (<30 cm), moderately rugose, or inflexible biota OR moderately robust, shallow-burrowing biota	Tall, delicate, large (>30 cm high), rugose, or inflexible biota OR delicate, shallow-burrowing biota	Immovable (bedrock and boulders >3 m)	<6 cm (transferable)	6 cm - 3 m (removable)
Hand collection	1	1	1	1	1	2
Demersal longline	1	1	2	1	1	1
Handline	1	1	2	1	1	1
Trap	1	2	2	1	1	1
Bottom gill net or other entangling net	1	2	3	1	1	1
Danish seine	1	2	3	1	2	3
Demersal trawl (including pair, otter twin-rig, and otter multi-rig)	1	3	3	1	3	3
Dredge	3	3	3	1	3	3

Substratum hardness

PF7.4.14 This attribute shall be scored on the basis of substrata composition (Table PF15).

PF7.4.15 Scoring of this attribute shall consider the substrata identified via the SGB characterisation process (CSA step 1).

PF7.4.16 Record the “substratum hardness” score for each habitat in the ‘MSC RBF Worksheets’.

² Hobday, A. J., Smith, A., Webb, H., Daley, R., Wayte, S., Bulman, C., Dowdney, J., Williams, A., Sporcic, M., Dambacher, J., Fuller, M. and Walker, T. (2007). Ecological risk assessment for the effects of fishing: methodology. Report R04/1072 for the Australian Fisheries Management Authority, Canberra.

Substratum ruggedness

- PF7.4.17 This attribute shall be scored on the basis of the extent to which available habitat is actually accessible to mobile gear given the ruggedness of the substratum (Table PF15).
- PF7.4.18 Scoring of this attribute shall consider the characteristics of the substratum and the gear type being used.
- PF7.4.19 Record the “substratum ruggedness” score for each habitat in the ‘MSC RBF Worksheets’.

Seabed slope

- PF7.4.20 This attribute shall be scored on the basis of the impact to habitat that occurs as a result of slope steepness and mobility of substrata once dislodged (Table PF15). Scoring this attribute shall consider the degree of slope.
- PF7.4.21 Record the “seabed slope” score for each habitat in the ‘MSC RBF Worksheets’.
- PF7.4.22 The aggregate consequence score for each habitat shall be determined by using the ‘MSC RBF Worksheets’.

Table PF15: Scoring the substratum hardness, substratum ruggedness, and seabed slope attributes (modified from Hobday et al., 2007)

Gear type	Substratum hardness			Substratum ruggedness			Seabed slope		
	Hard (igneous, sedimentary, or heavily consolidated rock types)	Soft (lightly consolidated, weathered, or biogenic)	Sediments (unconsolidated)	High relief (>1 m), high outcrop, or rugged surface structure (cracks, crevices, overhangs, large boulders, rock walls)	Low relief (<1.0 m), rough surface structure (rubble, small boulders, rock edges), subcrop, or low outcrop	Flat, simple surface structure (mounds, undulations, ripples), current rippled, wave rippled, or irregular	Low degree (<1): Plains in coastal margin, inner or outer shelf or mid-slope OR terraces in mid-slope OR rocky banks/fringing reefs in coastal margin, inner or outer shelf, or upper or mid-slope	Medium degree (1-10): Terraces in outer shelf or upper slope	High degree (>10): Canyons in outer shelf, or upper or mid-slope OR seamounts/bioherms in coastal margin, inner shelf, or upper or mid-slope
Hand collection	1	2	3	3	3	1	1	2	3
Demersal longline	1	2	3	2	3	3	1	2	3
Handline	1	2	3	2	3	3	1	2	3
Trap	1	2	3	2	3	3	1	2	3

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Gear type	Substratum hardness			Substratum ruggedness			Seabed slope		
Bottom gill net or other entangling net	1	2	3	2	3	3	1	2	3
Danish seine	1	2	3	1	1	3	1	2	3
Demersal trawl (including, pair, otter twin-rig, and otter multi-rig)	1	2	3	1	3	3	1	2	3
Dredge	1	2	3	1	1	3	1	2	3

PF7.5 CSA Step 3: Score the spatial attributes

Gear footprint

- PF7.5.1 This attribute shall be scored on the basis of the gear's potential for disturbance and the number of encounters required to produce an impact on a habitat, taking into account the size, weight, and mobility of individual gears and the footprint of the gears (Table PF16).
- PF7.5.2 PF7.4.7.1 and its subclauses shall apply here.
- PF7.5.3 Record the gear footprint score for each habitat in the 'MSC RBF Worksheets'.

Table PF16: Scoring the gear footprint attribute (modified from Hobday et al., 2007)

Gear type	Gear footprint score
Hand collection	1
Handline	1
Trap	1
Demersal longline	2
Bottom gill net or other entangling net	2
Danish seine	2
Demersal trawl (including pair, otter twin-rig, and otter multi-rig)	3
Dredge	3

Spatial overlap

- PF7.5.4 This attribute shall be scored on the basis of spatial overlap between the habitat(s) distribution within the "managed area" and the distribution of areas fished by the UoA (Table PF17).
- PF7.5.5 MSC Fisheries Standard Annex SA3.13.5 and the subclauses shall apply here.
- PF7.5.6 Record the spatial overlap score for each habitat in the 'MSC RBF Worksheets'.

Encounterability

- PF7.5.7 This attribute shall be scored on the basis of the likelihood that a fishing gear will encounter the habitat within the "managed area", taking into account the nature and deployment of the fishing gear and the possibility of its interaction with the habitat (Table PF17).
- PF7.5.8 MSC Fisheries Standard Annex SA3.13.5 and the subclauses shall apply here.
- PF7.5.9 Record the encounterability score for each habitat in the 'MSC RBF Worksheets'.
- PF7.5.10 The aggregate spatial score shall be determined by using the 'MSC RBF Worksheets'.

Table PF17: Scoring spatial attributes (modified from Williams et al., 2011)

Spatial attribute	Score					
	0.5	1	1.5	2	2.5	3
Spatial overlap	UoA overlap with a habitat is ≤15%	UoA overlap with a habitat is ≤30%	UoA overlap with a habitat is ≤45%	UoA overlap with a habitat is ≤60%	UoA overlap with a habitat is ≤75%	UoA overlap with a habitat is >75%
Encounter-ability	Likelihood of encounter-ability is ≤15%	Likelihood of encounter-ability is ≤30%	Likelihood of encounter-ability is ≤45%	Likelihood of encounter-ability is ≤60%	Likelihood of encounter-ability is ≤75%	Likelihood of encounter-ability is >75%

PF7.6 CSA Step 4: Determine the CSA score and equivalent MSC score



PF7.6.1 The team shall use the 'MSC RBF Worksheets' to obtain the MSC CSA-derived score for each habitat (scoring element) and the equivalent MSC score.

PF7.6.2 The team shall convert the CSA score into a final MSC score for PI 2.4.1.

PF7.6.2.1 In cases where there is only 1 habitat (scoring element), the team shall convert the MSC CSA-derived score into the final MSC score.

- a. The MSC score for the 1 scoring element shall become the final MSC score.
- b. The final MSC score shall be rounded to the nearest whole number (e.g. 87) and shall be recorded in the 'MSC Reporting Template'.

PF7.6.2.2 In cases where there is more than 1 scoring element and they all receive the same MSC CSA-derived score, the team shall convert the MSC CSA-derived scores into the final MSC score.

- a. The MSC scores for the scoring elements shall become the final MSC score (e.g. if they are all 64, the final score is 64).
- b. The final MSC score shall be rounded to the nearest whole number and shall be recorded in the 'MSC Reporting Template'.

PF7.6.2.3 In cases where there is more than 1 scoring element and they receive different MSC CSA-derived scores, the team shall derive the final MSC score by applying the rules in Table PF18.

- a. The final MSC score shall be in an increment of 5 (e.g. 60, 65, 70) and shall be recorded in the 'MSC Reporting Template'.
- b. The PI shall fail if any scoring element is assessed as high risk (i.e. <60).

Table PF18: Combining multiple scoring element scores

Score	Combination of individual scoring elements
None	Any scoring elements within a PI that fail to reach a score of 60 represent a failure against the MSC Fisheries Standard and no score shall be assigned.
60	All elements have a score of 60 and only 60.
65	All elements score at least 60; a few achieve higher scores, approaching or exceeding 80, but most do not reach 80.
70	All elements score at least 60; some achieve higher scores, approaching or exceeding 80; but some fail to achieve 80 and require intervention action.
75	All elements score at least 60; most achieve higher scores, approaching or exceeding 80; only a few fail to achieve 80 and require intervention action.
80	All elements score 80.
85	All elements score at least 80; a few achieve higher scores, but most do not approach 100.
90	All elements score at least 80; some achieve higher scores approaching 100, but some do not.
95	All elements score at least 80; most achieve higher scores approaching 100; only a few fail to score at or very close to 100.
100	All elements score 100.

PF7.6.3 Where no additional information exists to bring to bear on the PI, the team shall apply the MSC score directly to the PI within the ‘MSC Reporting Template’ and provide rationale as justification.

PF7.6.3.1 If there is additional information regarding the attribute(s) that justifies modifying the MSC score either upwards or downwards by a maximum of 10 points, such information shall be used to reach the final MSC score for the PI. !!

- a. The team shall use all information that is available on the UoA to inform the assessment.
- b. The team shall provide the justification for any score modification.

PF7.6.4 If the team has only considered “main” habitats in its CSA analysis, the final PI score shall not be greater than 95, reflecting the fact that only the “main” habitats were assessed.

PF7.7 Setting conditions using the CSA

PF7.7.1 Where any habitat (scoring element) score is less than 80, the team shall set a condition on the PI. ■

PF7.7.1.1 If a condition is triggered when assessing the PI using the CSA, the team shall make sure that the proposed Client Action Plan is capable of raising the score to 80, addressing all the habitats for which the score was below 80 and without causing additional associated problems.

PF8 Conducting a Scale Intensity Consequence Analysis (SICA)

PF8.1 Preparation

PF8.1.1 The team shall conduct a SICA for each data-deficient scoring element identified within PI 2.5.1.

PF8.2 Stakeholder involvement within the SICA

PF8.2.1 The team shall use input from stakeholders to:

- a. Assist in the identification of ecosystems that are affected by the fishery.
- b. Provide information suitable for the qualitative evaluation of the risks that the fishing activity poses to the ecosystem.
- c. Assist in scoring the spatial and temporal scales and the intensity of the fishing activity.
- d. Assist in scoring the consequence for the ecosystem.

PF8.3 SICA Step 1: Prepare SICA scoring template for each data-deficient scoring element

PF8.3.1 The scores and justifications shall be documented in the SICA scoring template (Table PF19), in the 'MSC Reporting Template'.

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Table PF19: SICA scoring template for PI 2.5.1 Ecosystem

Performance Indicator PI 2.5.1 Ecosystem outcome	Spatial scale of fishing activity	Temporal scale of fishing activity	Intensity of fishing activity	Relevant subcomponents	Consequence score
Fishery name				Species composition	
				Functional group composition	
				Distribution of the community	
				Trophic size/structure	
Justification for spatial scale of fishing activity					
Justification for temporal scale of fishing activity					
Justification for intensity of fishing activity					
Justification for consequence score					

PF8.4 SICA Step 2: Score spatial scale

- PF8.4.1 The team shall work with stakeholders at the RBF stakeholder meeting(s) to assign a spatial scale score.
- PF8.4.2 The greatest spatial extent shall be used to determine the spatial scale score for the overlap of the ecosystem with the fishing activity (Table PF20). ■
- PF8.4.2.1 Only the overlap of the ecosystem with the fishing activity of the UoA shall be considered.
- PF8.4.3 The score shall be recorded in the SICA scoring template for each component and the justification documented.

Table PF20: SICA spatial scale scores

<1%	1-15%	16-30%	31-45%	46-60%	>60%
1	2	3	4	5	6

PF8.5 SICA Step 3: Score temporal scale

- PF8.5.1 The team shall work with stakeholders at the RBF stakeholder meeting(s) to assign a temporal scale score.
- PF8.5.2 The highest temporal frequency shall be used for determining the temporal scale score for the overlap of the ecosystem with the fishing activity (Table PF21). ■
- PF8.5.2.1 Only the number of the days of the fishing activity of the Unit of Assessment shall be considered.
- PF8.5.3 The score shall be recorded onto the SICA scoring template for each component and the justification documented.

Table PF21: SICA temporal scale score

1 day every 10 years or so	1 day every few years	1-100 days per year	101-200 days per year	201-300 days per year	301-365 days per year
1	2	3	4	5	6

PF8.6 SICA Step 4: Score the intensity

- PF8.6.1 The team shall work with stakeholders at the RBF stakeholder meeting(s) to assign a score for intensity. !!
- PF8.6.1.1 The intensity of the activity shall be based on the spatial and temporal scale of the activity, its nature and extent.
- PF8.6.1.2 The direct impacts of the fishing activity to the ecosystem under evaluation shall be considered for the score for intensity (Table PF22). !!
- PF8.6.2 The score shall be recorded in the SICA scoring template for the component in question and the justification documented.

Table PF22: SICA intensity scores

Level	Score	Description
Negligible	1	Remote likelihood of detection of fishing activity at any spatial or temporal scale.
Minor	2	Activity occurs rarely or in few restricted locations and detectability of fishing activity even at these scales is rare.
Moderate	3	Moderate detectability of fishing activity at broader spatial scale, or obvious but local detectability.
Major	4	Detectable evidence of fishing activity occurs reasonably often at broad spatial scale.
Severe	5	Occasional but very obvious detectability or widespread and frequent evidence of fishing activity.
Catastrophic	6	Local to regional evidence of fishing activity or continual and widespread detectability.

PF8.7 SICA Step 5: Identify the most vulnerable subcomponent of the ecosystem and score the consequence of the activity on the subcomponent

- PF8.7.1 The team shall work with stakeholders at the RBF stakeholder meeting(s) to select the subcomponent on which the fishing activity is having the most impact.
- PF8.7.2 One subcomponent shall be selected that represents the subcomponent on which the fishing activity is having the most impact. ■
- PF8.7.3 When choosing which subcomponent to score, the team shall recognise that different subcomponents may be proxies for measuring the same effect but are much easier to observe and score on a qualitative basis.
- PF8.7.4 The consequence score shall be based on information provided by all stakeholders and the expert judgement of the team and shall draw qualitatively from the scale and intensity scores. !!
- PF8.7.4.1 In the absence of agreement or information, the highest risk score considered plausible shall be used. ■
- PF8.7.5 The consequence of the activity shall be scored using the SICA consequence Table PF23.
- PF8.7.6 The team shall record the consequence score as fail if the consequence of the activity is determined not to meet the performance levels in consequence category 60.
- PF8.7.7 When assessing “changes” to subcomponents, only changes due to fishing activities shall be considered.
- PF8.7.8 The consequence score shall be recorded in the SICA scoring template and the justification documented.

Table PF23: SICA consequence score

Subcomponent	Consequence category			
	Fail	60	80	100
Species composition	Consequence is higher risk than 60 level.	Detectable changes to the community species composition without a major change in function (no loss of function). Changes to species composition up to 10%. Time to recover from impact on the scale of several to 20 years.	Impacted species do not play a keystone role (including trophic cascade impact) – only minor changes in relative abundance of other constituents. Changes of species composition up to 5%. Time to recover from impact up to 5 years.	Interactions may be occurring that affect the internal dynamics of communities, leading to change in species composition not detectable against natural variation.
Functional group composition		Changes in relative abundance of community constituents up to 10% chance of flipping to an alternate state/ trophic cascade.	Minor changes in relative abundance of community constituents up to 5%.	Interactions that affect the internal dynamics of communities leading to change in functional group composition not detectable against natural variation.
Distribution of the community		Detectable change in geographic range of communities with some impact on community dynamics. Change in geographic range up to 10% of original. Time to recover from impact on the scale of several to twenty years.	Possible detectable change in geographic range of communities but minimal impact on community dynamics change in geographic range up to 5% of original.	Interactions that affect the distribution of communities unlikely to be detectable against natural variation.
Trophic/size structure		Changes in mean trophic level and biomass/number in each size class up to 10%. Time to recover from impact on the scale of several to 20 years.	Change in mean trophic level and biomass/number in each size class up to 5%.	Changes that affect the internal dynamics unlikely to be detectable against natural variation.

PF8.8 Scoring PI 2.5.1 using the RBF

- PF8.8.1 The SICA score shall determine the final score for the ecosystem.
- PF8.8.2 The team shall consider whether there is additional information to bring to bear on the PI.
- PF8.8.2.1 If not, the team shall apply the converted score directly to the PI with the accompanying scoring template and a rationale provided as justification.
 - PF8.8.2.2 If there is additional information that justifies modifying the MSC score either upwards or downwards by a maximum of 10 points, such information shall be used to reach the final MSC score for the PI.
 - PF8.8.2.3 The team shall use all information that is available on the UoA to inform the assessment.
 - PF8.8.2.4 The team shall provide the justification for any score modification.
 - PF8.8.2.5 The team shall record all changes to the score and rationale for the changes.
- PF8.8.3 The team shall record the final PI score in the SICA table in the 'MSC Reporting Template'.

PF8.9 Setting conditions using the RBF (PI 2.5.1)

- PF8.9.1 Where any score is less than 80, the team shall set a condition on that PI.
- PF8.9.1.1 If a condition is triggered when assessing a PI using the SICA, the team shall make sure that the Client Action Plan proposed by the fishery is capable of raising the score to 80.
 - PF8.9.1.2 If the action plan is not capable of raising the SICA score to 80 within a suitable timeframe, the team shall not allow a fishery to use the RBF for this PI in subsequent MSC assessments.
 - a. In such cases, the team shall raise a condition on the PI that there shall be information collected to support an analysis of the impact of the fishery on the ecosystem by the time of reassessment.

End of Annex PF

End of Fisheries Certification Process

MSC Guidance to the Fisheries Certification Process



Version 2.2, 25 March 2020

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The official language of this standard is English. The definitive version is maintained on the MSC website (msc.org). Any discrepancy between copies, versions or translations shall be resolved by reference to the definitive English version.

The MSC prohibits any modification of part or all of the contents in any form.

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Responsibility for the MSC Guidance to the Fisheries Certification Process

The Marine Stewardship Council is responsible for the MSC Guidance to the Fisheries Certification Process.

Readers should verify that they are using the latest copy of this and other documents. Updated documents, together with a master list of all available MSC documents, can be found on the MSC website (msc.org).

Versions published

Version no.	Date	Description of amendment
2.0	1 October 2014	New document released as part of the Fisheries Standard Review completed in 2014.
2.1	31 August 2018	Version released incorporating guidance to support changes to the fisheries assessment process, including streamlining, harmonisation and labour policy development topics.
2.2	25 March 2020	Version issued incorporating guidance to support changes to: the confirmation of scope process, defining the Unit of Assessment and Unit of Certification, conditions, and the expedited audit process. Minor edits and clarifications were also incorporated.

Introduction to this document

The Guidance to the MSC Fisheries Certification Process (GFCP) to provided help CABs interpret the Fisheries Certification Process (FCP). The GFCP is maintained as a separate document.

The headings and numbering in the GFCP, when included, match those in the FCP exactly, with numbers prefaced with the letter “G” to indicate guidance.

The MSC recommends that CABs read the FCP in conjunction with the GFCP. Text in the FCP is not repeated in the GFCP.

Where guidance is provided that generally relates to the subject of a section, or relates to the content of a specific clause, this icon  appears at the end of the section title or clause in the FCP, and if critical guidance is included, this icon  appears. These icons provide hyperlinks to the related guidance section in the GFCP.

 Critical guidance is identified within the GFCP using a sidebar, as illustrated in this paragraph.

Within the GFCP, this icon  provides a hyperlink back to the corresponding section or clause in the FCP.

Auditability of the Guidance to the Fisheries Certification Process

The guidance in the GFCP is not directly auditable. The critical guidance identified in the GFCP should be followed by CABs where applicable. It is likely that this critical guidance would be referenced by the accreditation body in any non-conformity to related FCP clauses.

The presence of critical guidance is identified with this icon  in the FCP and includes:

- **Special cases** relating to requirements that apply to a particular type of fishery, data or situation.
- **Additional clarification** on how a clause in the FCP would usually be expected to be implemented. The use of different methods would need to be justified.

Derogations

A derogation indicates a measure that allows for all or part of the requirement to be applied differently, or not at all, to certain applicants or certificate holders. Derogations are indicated by a footnote including:

- The authority who made the decision on the derogation.
- The date or meeting number of the decision.
- The date on which the derogation came into force or expires.
- A short description of the derogation.

Derogations are also issued via the MSC Interpretation Log. The MSC shall inform CABs when derogations are issued.

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MSC Guidance to the Fisheries Certification Process

Guidance to implementation timeframes ▲

The implementation timeframes are different for MSC Fisheries Certification Process (FCP) v2.2 and the MSC Fisheries Standard. Implementation timeframes for the Standard are given in the [MSC Fisheries Standard v2.01](#).

Over the life of a certificate, individual surveillance audits may use different versions of the process requirements (e.g. CR v1.3, FCR v2.0, FCP v2.1, FCP v2.2, etc.). A CAB is not expected to change between versions during any assessment process.

Unit of Assessment (UoA) and Unit of Certification (UoC)

CABs are encouraged to update the UoA and UoC as per 7.5.2, 7.5.3 and 7.5.6 at the next surveillance audit or reassessment following release of FCP v2.2. Most fisheries are unlikely to see significant changes, if any, in the scope of the assessment (see G7.5).

G1 **Scope ▲**

No Guidance.

G2 **Normative documents ▲**

Note that the normative references provided are additional to those found in the [MSC General Certification Requirements](#) for CABs.

All MSC forms and templates can be found on the MSC website (msc.org).

G3 **Terms and definitions ▲**

All terms used in the MSC program documents are defined in the [MSC-MSCI Vocabulary](#).

The term “assessment” is used for the initial assessment and 5-yearly reassessments, and the term “audit” is used for annual surveillance audits and expedited audits.

G4 General requirements

G4.2 Consultation requirements ▲

Stakeholder engagement is a critical component of the MSC fisheries assessment process:

- A robust stakeholder consultation process is fundamental to conducting a high-quality assessment.
- Stakeholder input provides important information to assessment team members and CABs.
- Stakeholder input contributes significantly to the credibility and outcome of the assessment process.

Stakeholder engagement throughout the Fisheries Certification Process (FCP) is designed to improve the quality and consistency of stakeholder input in the assessment process, ensuring:

- Early identification of relevant stakeholders, each of whom are given adequate opportunity to provide their views during relevant stages of the assessment.
- Issues raised by stakeholders are acknowledged and reported as early in the assessment process as possible to provide maximum opportunity for resolution.
- Comments from stakeholders are targeted and relevant to each assessment.
- Responses from CABs are presented such that it is easy to see how, where, and why the comments have (or have not) been considered.

G7 Process requirements ▲

Background

Certification to the MSC Fisheries Standard includes 4 major steps:

6. **Pre-assessment:** An optional confidential report from a CAB tells a fishery whether it is likely to achieve certification. The report may also be used by the client as a guide to prepare for full assessment.
7. **Preparation:** The client prepares for a full assessment in response to pre-assessment findings and other relevant information. No requirements for the preparation step are presented in the FCP.
8. **Full assessment:** This is the process to determine whether the fishery conforms to the MSC Fisheries Standard. The process is led by an appointed CAB and its expert assessment team. It involves preparation before announcement, consulting with stakeholders, reviewing Performance Indicators (PIs), scoring the fishery, identifying areas where the fishery should strengthen its performance (if needed), peer review, making a determination and a final decision about whether or not the fishery meets the MSC Fisheries Standard. This is an intensive process that calls for a high level of information to be provided by the fishery client and other stakeholders.
9. **Post-assessment:** Surveillance audits are conducted by the appointed CAB. Fisheries are encouraged to make the most of certification using the MSC Chain of Custody (CoC) Standard for seafood traceability (See [Chain of Custody Certification Requirements](#)).

G7.1.4 Conformity with ISO 17065 ▲

The requirements on conformity to ISO 17065 are linked to the MSC General Certification Requirements and associated guidance, which emphasises the importance of ensuring that the CAB's impartiality procedures are robust.

G7.1.8 Communication CAB-client ▲

MSC timelines are prescriptive. Clients should be made aware that their failure to prepare properly – if the relevant information is not available, or if critical issues have not been addressed – might mean that the fishery could fail assessment. This could then lead to the client incurring additional cost.

G7.1.10 Information collection related to MSC pre-assessments ▲

Official MSC pre-assessment reports prepared by CABs are submitted to the MSC at time of entry to full assessment, not at the time of annual reporting of summary information.

The information provided may be aggregated and publicly reported on the MSC website to show regional pre-assessment activities without revealing either the CAB or client identities or other specific fishery details.

This reporting allows the MSC to monitor the number of fisheries that are engaging with the MSC process in different regions of the world and assess the proportions of those fisheries that subsequently enter (as opposed to those who do not enter) full assessment. The example (Table G1) report provides information from the same CAB for a later year and includes a status update for a previously reported pre-assessment.

Table G1: Example report (for a year after the first submission, including updates for the previous year where the status is now known or revised)

Conformity Assessment Body (name)		ABC Certification Ltd							
Reporting period (year ending 31 March)	Fishery Species	Stock (location)	Gear type(s)	Client (organisation name)	Fishery scale	Fishery evaluation at time of pre-assessment		Actions since pre-assessment	
						Status (1, 2 or 3)	Justification for assigned status	Status (1, 2, 3, 4 or 5)	Notes
2012	Brown trout (<i>Salmo trutta</i>)	Deep Lake, Scotland	Gill net	BT Fishing Ltd	Small scale	3		1	Now in preparation for submission of announcement documents
2012	Herring (<i>Clupea harengus</i>)	Irish Sea	Gill net	New Fishing Ltd	Semi-industrial	2	Expected fail in Principle 3 due to lack of written research plan and other issues	3	Working on research plan, expect to enter full assessment when complete
<p>Include rows below to update information on fisheries included in previous annual reports where the status was 'not known' at the time of first reporting, or where the status has since changed</p>									
2011	Lobster (<i>Homarus gammarus</i>)	Isle of Skye, UK	Pot	DEF Fishing Ltd	Small scale	1	Expected fail on Principle 1 due to lack of existing harvest control rules	2	Entered assessment with CAB XYZ Ltd. Announced September 2011

G7.3 Client Document Checklist ▲

To proceed to announcement, MSC requires that the CAB must be in possession of a completed Client Document Checklist. The intent of this checklist is that the client and the CAB are sure that all available information needed for an assessment has been collated, that a plan has been made to collate any outstanding information, and that the fishery is fully prepared to proceed to assessment. To that end, the checklist will identify the type and extent of data and information that will be made available for assessment, and any actions that have been taken by the fishery to address critical issues raised in a pre-assessment.

G7.4 Confirmation of scope ▲

Background

This section contains a series of actions required to be undertaken prior to the CAB confirming the scope of the assessment. These actions include:

- Ensuring that the fishery is within scope of the MSC Fisheries Standard.
- Reviewing pre-assessment reports and other information.
- Confirming the proposed units of assessment and certification.
- Determining whether the fishery has previously failed an assessment.
- Determining whether the certificate may be shared with fishers not initially part of the client group.
- Determining whether inseparable or practicably inseparable (IPI) stock(s) are caught.
- Determining whether the fishery is enhanced.
- Determining whether the fishery overlaps with another MSC certified or applicant fishery.
- Determining whether the fishery is based on an introduced species.
- Ensuring submission of the 'Certificate Holder Forced and Child Labour Policies, Practices and Measures Template' by the client.

Once this process is completed based on the above criteria the scope of the assessment is confirmed.

Actions associated with this analysis are generally focused on information gathering and preparatory steps required before the team can be formed, the assessment tree can be confirmed and the assessment and scoring of the fishery can be undertaken. It is designed to provide robust and consistent assessments and maintain the integrity of the MSC Program.

G7.4.2.4 Conviction for forced and child labour ▲

To confirm scope, a CAB will need to confirm that no conviction which confirms guilt in respect of violation of a forced or child labour law, has occurred in the last 2 years.

The intent of this requirement is that it should apply to specific vessels or groups of vessels as defined in 7.24.5.2, which are implicated in the conviction with the legal entities e.g. individuals or companies that have been convicted for forced or child labour offences. Figure G1 illustrates the process for removing an entity from an MSC certified fishery.

The International Labour Organisation definition of forced labour comprises 2 key elements:

- Work or service is exacted under the menace of a penalty, which can imply monetary sanctions, physical punishment, the loss of rights and privileges, or restriction of movement (e.g. refusing to allow free access to identity documents).
- Work is not voluntary.

Other unethical practices considered by the International Labour Organisation to fall under the category of forced labour include debt bondage, human trafficking and other forms of modern slavery.

The International Labour Organisation defines child labour as work that is mentally, physically, socially or morally dangerous and harmful to children, or work that interferes with their schooling by depriving them of the opportunity to attend school, obliging them to leave school prematurely; or requiring them to attempt to combine school attendance with excessively long and heavy work.

The client or client group should also consider work prohibited in national legislation when completing the 'Certificate Holder Forced and Child Labour Policies, Practices and Measures Template', and should exclude permissible light work.

To ensure that a certified entity does not fall out of scope because of forced or child labour violations, companies, fishery client group members and their subcontracted parties should ensure compliance with national and international laws on forced or child labour and follow relevant guidance where available.

G7.4.2.8 Submission of forced and child labour policies statement ▲

The client may find it more convenient to use separate Certificate Holder Forced and Child Labour Policies, Practices and Measures Templates where there are differences in practice across a fishery. There are no restrictions to a client doing this and the MSC database allows multiple templates to be uploaded.

G7.4.2.10 Conviction for shark finning ▲

To confirm scope, a CAB should check with relevant management authorities and compile any other relevant data to confirm that no conviction which confirms guilt with respect to a violation of shark finning law has occurred in the last 2 years.

The intent of this requirement is that it should apply to specific vessels or groups of vessels as defined under 7.24.5.2, which are implicated in the conviction with the legal entities, e.g. individuals or companies that have been convicted for shark finning offences. Figure G1 illustrates the process for removing an entity from an MSC certified fishery. If an entity has been removed from a Unit of Certification due to a shark finning conviction, that entity may request to re-enter the Unit of Certification once they can demonstrate that 2 years have passed since the conviction. In this instance, the CAB should follow requirements in Section 7.27.

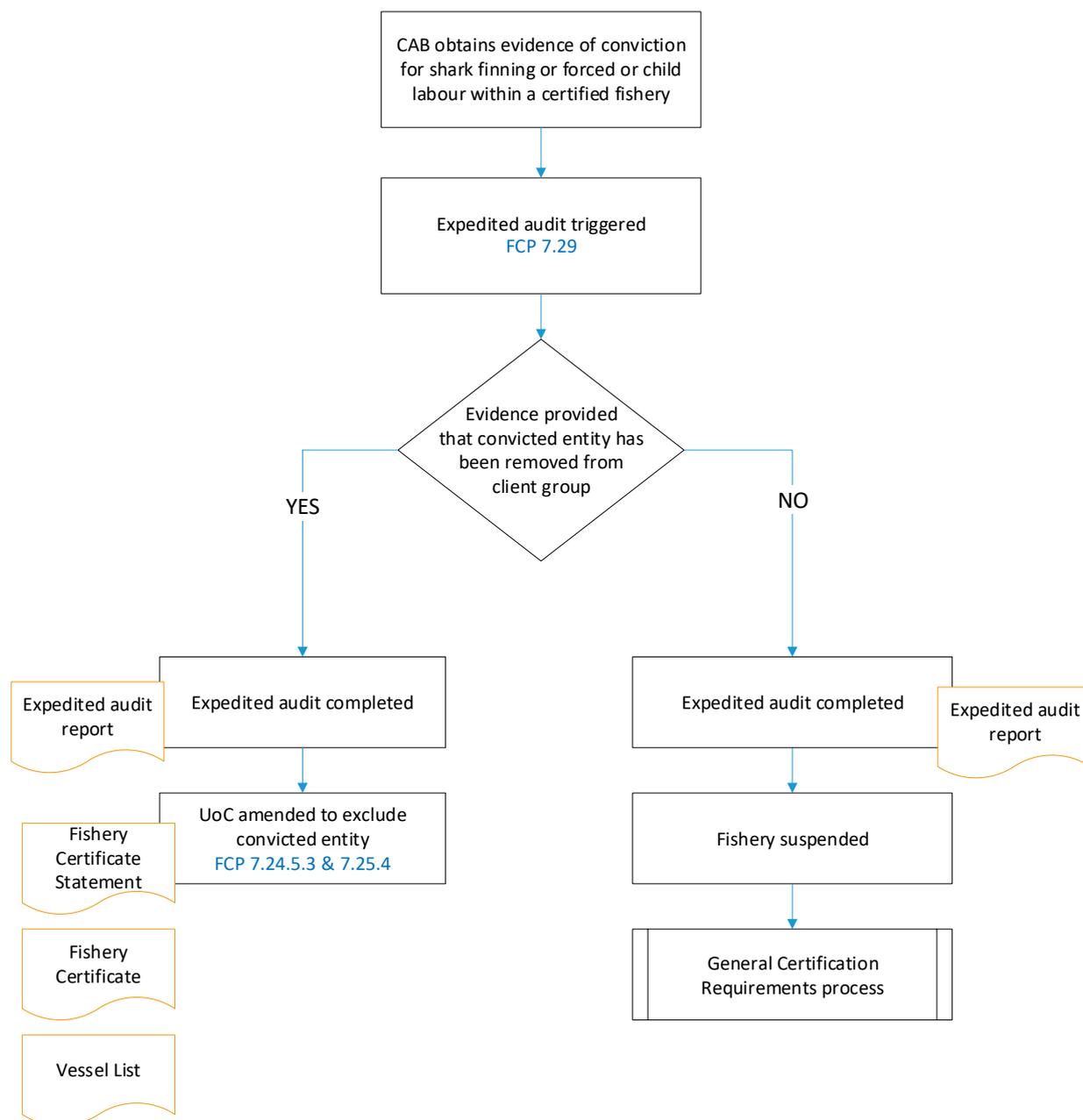


Figure G1: Process for removing an entity from an MSC certified fishery

G7.4.2.11 Controversy – disputes ▲

As part of Principle 3 of the MSC Fisheries Standard, the fishery is required to incorporate an appropriate mechanism for the resolution of disputes arising within the system. It is worth noting that outstanding disputes of substantial magnitude involving a significant number of interests will normally disqualify a fishery from certification. However, the existence of controversies or disputes are of themselves not enough to stop a fishery from being eligible for certification. The existence of lawsuits are not considered a barrier to certification, otherwise parties opposed to certification could simply lodge lawsuits to prevent an outcome they did not support. The judgement should be whether a dispute compromises the ability of the management system to provide sustainable management.

Note that a fishery could pass the 3 points in 7.4.2.11.a with stakeholders having used the mechanism for resolving disputes but remaining unsatisfied with the outcome.

G7.4.2.12 Enhanced fisheries ▲

The MSC's primary focus is on ensuring the long-term viability of global fish populations and the health of the aquatic ecosystems upon which they depend. The MSC has always included some methods of fishery enhancement within the MSC Program but has specifically excluded aquaculture. The MSC's intent is to enable certain defined types of enhanced fisheries to be eligible for certification against the MSC Standard while maintaining this focus.

Given the wide range of types of enhanced fishery that may seek to enter the MSC Program, it is recognised that existing certification requirements and guidance may require modification for the assessment of enhanced fisheries, through the development of additional (or modification of existing) Performance Indicators and Scoring Guideposts.

The MSC has developed a range of documents to provide guidance on specific types of enhanced fisheries.

Categories of enhanced fisheries

Table 1 in the FCP defines the criteria by which enhanced fisheries may be identified as being within the scope of the MSC Program. The categories of potential within-scope enhanced fisheries are as follows:

- **Hatch and catch (HAC):** This production system may be considered within scope in certain circumstances, reflecting the established case history and precedent set by the hatchery-stocked salmon fisheries. For these types of fishery, more intensive culture activities may be allowed as long as they only apply to a brief period within the species' life cycle.
- **Catch and grow (CAG):** This production system's grow-out and holding systems may be considered within scope under certain conditions. CAG has some features of intensive aquaculture – requiring routine inputs, such as feed, chemical or medicinal treatments – that are outside of scope. CAG systems that only require limited enhancement (e.g. rope culture of bivalves) may be considered within scope for the entirety of their operation.
- **Habitat-modified:** This production system involves the modification to habitat, such as salmon fry farms located next to river systems.

A single fishery may display several of the features of CAG, HAC or habitat-modified fisheries. In the application of MSC requirements, it is intended that any overlap between categories should not become complicating factors in determining whether a given fishery is within or outside scope. Distinctions are drawn in some cases between applications of the criteria to these different categories.

For enhanced fisheries, only the part of the catch that is clearly landed during the catching operation (e.g. permanently removed from the water by the fishery) would be eligible to enter into MSC certified chains of custody. The part of the catch that is clearly landed would be subject to the normal chain of custody and fishery traceability requirements. Operations in which no part of the catch is clearly landed are considered inseparable from any subsequent 'grow-out' phase and the scope criteria for enhanced fisheries apply to the operation in its entirety.

The MSC requirements allow for enhanced fisheries that are interested in initiating an MSC assessment to commence the process prior to the completion of further MSC requirements and guidance since:

- Some enhanced fisheries may be able to proceed with assessment against the existing default tree.
- Other enhanced fisheries may be considered in scope but require additional guidance and/or Performance Indicator Scoring Guideposts to be scored.
- The performance assessment issues that would be expected to be covered by these modifications for each category of enhanced fishery are outlined below and in 7.4.2.12.

Scope criteria A: Linkages to and maintenance of a wild stock

Given the MSC focus on the sustainability of global wild fish stocks, the concept of 'wildness' plays a central role in scoping enhanced fisheries.

The fishery should incorporate some element of harvest of a wild population and should be managed so that the natural productivity and genetic biodiversity of that population is not undermined with respect to any impacts on long-term sustainability.

Linkages to wild stocks may exist either in HAC systems where marine species are raised to a larval or juvenile stage in captivity and then released into and harvested from a wild stock or CAG systems where species are harvested as juveniles or young adults from the wild and then raised in captivity until they are sold on to the market.

Scope criteria B: Feeding and husbandry

The criteria included in this group emphasise the main focus of the MSC on harvest of wild species. Production systems that show characteristics more consistent with closed and/or intensive aquaculture are out of scope.

Feeding is a fundamental requirement in most intensive aquaculture systems and thus provides a clear means for distinguishing between wild- and farmed-production systems. The framing of the scope criteria distinguishes between the use of feeding for a short initial period in HAC fisheries (e.g. stocked salmon fisheries) and the intent to exclude those CAG fisheries where feed inputs are used to achieve the greater part of the weight gain of the fish over their life cycle. Other CAG operations that rely on natural sources of feed (e.g. mussels and other bivalves) are thus considered potentially within scope against this criterion.

Criterion Bi allows for the certification of fish that are fed in captivity only for the purpose of maintaining condition once caught, as commonly practised in holding facilities for crustaceans prior to sale.

The application of criterion Bii specifically to CAG operations recognises that disease prevention and other measures to maximise survival may be routinely used in some HAC fisheries. Such practices are allowed within these systems to reflect the limitations on potential environmental impacts imposed by the short duration of the captive-growth phase. Such impacts shall however be included in the Principle 2 assessment in this type of fishery.

Scope criteria C: Habitat and ecosystem impacts

Habitat modifications in enhanced fisheries can include both physical changes to the sea bed or river course and the use of a range of man-made structures associated with the rearing or capture of fish that are not strictly 'fishing gear'. In the first case, modifications can range from the construction of simple ponds in intertidal areas or river floodplains through to watercourse management measures aimed at improving spawning habitats. Examples of the second case are fish attracting and/or aggregating devices (e.g. FADs), lobster casitas and mussel culture ropes (in CAG systems). Such artificial habitat modifications either enhance the productivity of the fishery or facilitate the capture or production of commercial marine species.

G7.5 Scope of assessment: Defining the Unit of Certification and Unit of Assessment ▲

MSC certification is specific to the fishery holding the certificate, defined as the Unit of Certification (UoC). The CAB may choose to assess a wider unit, as the Unit of Assessment (UoA), to which the certificate may be extended under some circumstances. Both the UoC and UoA need to be defined at the start of assessment.

The MSC allows parts of a fishery (a combination of stock(s)/gear(s)/vessel(s)) to be certified, even if the rest of the fishery is not certified. By defining the UoC this way the MSC seeks to reward good practice and encourage any set of fishers to demonstrate their sustainability irrespective of the activity of other fishers, who may not be using best practice.

While the MSC allows a portion of the fishery to be certified, it does not allow the UoA nor UoC to be defined by a subset of activities undertaken with the stock(s)/gear(s) combination. For example, a

fishery using a purse seine with multiple set types such as FAD-set and free school-set will need to include all set-types within the UoA and UoC.

Principle 1 applies to the whole of the fish stock(s) exploited by the fishery seeking certification, and this may include fleets fishing on that stock that are outside the UoA.

Under **Principle 2**, the fishery is held to account for its own interactions with the non-target catch, habitat and ecosystem. This includes all interactions with the gear(s)/vessel(s) in the UoA. While other fisheries and human uses may affect the marine ecosystem and may ultimately have impacts that prevent MSC certification of all related fisheries, interpretation of the MSC Standard is focused on the fishery seeking certification. In some circumstances, the impacts of other certified fisheries need to be considered, to avoid the problem of MSC fisheries generating cumulative impacts on Principle 2 components. This incentivises adoption of best practice by certified fisheries without requiring that they influence the entire fishery.

Principle 3 applies to the fishery seeking certification, except where elements of Principle 3 are required to achieve Principles 1 and 2.

G7.5.2-3 Defining the UoA/UoC ▲

The **Unit of Certification (UoC)** (i.e. the unit entitled to receive an MSC certificate) is defined as follows:

“The target stock or stocks (= biologically distinct unit(s)) combined with the fishing gear and vessel type(s) pursuing that stock.”

At its simplest, a single vessel with a single gear could be the UoC, although it is more likely that a number of vessels within the same fishery would form the UoC.

The **Unit of Assessment (UoA)** defines the full scope of what is being assessed and is therefore equal to or larger than the UoC. If it is larger this means it will include other eligible fishers. Such other eligible fishers exist in cases where a client enters assessment with the aim of initially certifying only part of a fishery (e.g. vessels owned by a single entity), but also wishes to have the possibility of expanding the UoC later by the mechanism of certificate sharing.

If the number of fishers within the UoA is greater than the number within the UoC then there are other eligible fishers. Any difference between the UoC and UoA must be clearly communicated by the CAB to the MSC and other stakeholders.

Sufficient information should be provided to fully define the scope of the fishery that is to be assessed. In some fisheries, for example, further information may be given on the specific fishing seasons and/or areas that are included. Details could also be provided on which fishing ‘fleets’ are covered, or licence categories, as used in the management of the fishery. ‘Groups’ of vessels could also be identified that are not full fleets, but still have some special characteristics, such as membership of an association of some sort, or a binding commitment to a special code of conduct. In cases where an assessment is intended to cover all fishing activities on a stock within the national waters of a state, there may be no need to specify individually all the different fleets or varieties of vessels that are covered (although the diversity of such vessels and gears should then be considered in scoring). In some cases, individual vessels, or groups of vessels owned by a particular client may also be named, if the scope of the assessment is limited to only these vessels.

In defining a UoA/UoC, stocks could be different species, or different ‘more or less isolated and self-sustaining’ groups within a species. UoAs/UoCs are usually defined for a single species (or stock) and the gear type(s) used to catch that species. Clients may prefer more than one species, stock or gear type to be included in a UoA/UoC. The advantages of joint scoring in these cases (e.g. cost savings, simpler tracking in the chain of custody, etc.) may outweigh the possible risk that the failure of one element could result in the failure of the whole UoA.

G7.5.2.b Defining gear type(s) used in the UoAs/UoCs ▲

The fishing gear is defined as the tool with which living aquatic resources are captured. For MSC assessments, gear type is distinguished based on the physical configuration, rather than how the gear

is deployed. For example, a beam trawl with sumwing can be classified as a different gear type than a beam trawl with tickler chains, because these have different configurations – in this instance different accessory equipment. However, beam trawling on sandy bottom and beam trawling on rocky substrate would not constitute the use of different gears and both activities are required to be included in a single UoA.

Multiple gears can be included in a single UoA/UoC or there can be multiple UoAs/UoCs each with one gear type.

Single UoA/UoC with multiple gears

Where there are discrete variations in the type of gear used (such as 2 different mesh sizes used in a standard type of trawl gear), the CAB may include these within a single UoA. Each gear must be clearly described and considered in the assessment and scoring (with any conditions included as normal for <80 scores, etc.). If certified, the CAB should monitor the use of each gear at surveillance to ensure that the effort applied to each is not changing to the extent that the impact of the fishery would also change, and if it is, the scoring should be updated accordingly. Clients and CABs should note that when two or more gear types are scored together, the lower score will determine the result. Decisions on the definition of the UoA should thus reflect the benefits of joint scoring against the risk of an individual analysis on a gear type resulting in a fail for all the others in the UoA.

Single UoA/UoC with single gear

In cases where the UoA/UoC includes a single gear type, CABs should consider whether there are any variations in use, and if so, should describe these variations and any potential differences in impact on Principle 2 components. CABs should monitor any changes in use at surveillance to ensure the full impact of the variations are considered in scoring. Examples include, but are not limited to, variations in how the gear is deployed, or variations in type of bait used.

The UoA/UoC must include all activities undertaken for the specified gear. For example, in a UoA where the gear type is purse seine it may be used in multiple ways such as setting on a FAD or on a free-school of fish. Where there are multiple set-types employed by the UoA, all set-types must be included in the UoA assessment of each gear type.

Such a flexible approach is allowed in order to minimise the complexity of assessment reports as far as possible while still ensuring that all fishing impacts for the combined gear types/variations are fully assessed.

Trading of catch quota between vessels

In cases where catch quota for certified fish stocks are traded between vessels, fleets or nations, such catches should be regarded as being included within the UoA/UoC only in cases where the recipient of the quota is already explicitly included within the UoA/UoC and/or recognised as a member of the client group or is itself certified and catches that fish in conformity with its own UoA/UoC.

Such trading of catch quota does not automatically carry with it the right to enter catches into MSC certified chains of custody, although this may be possible in the above circumstances.

Teams should assess the impacts of the fishing by any quota recipients consistent with the normal requirement that the Principle 1 assessment covers all impacts on the stock. Any changes in such access arrangements in an existing certified fishery should be considered during surveillance audits.

Assessment of metapopulations within the UoA/UoC

The MSC requires that fishing activity on Principle 1 species is assessed at a level that is sustainable for the stock. However, the application of the “stock” concept may vary depending on the knowledge available and complexity in management.³

Generally, from the fisheries management point of view, a unit stock can be defined as a group of fish that can be treated as a stock and managed as an independent unit, as long as the results of the assessment and the impact of management measures do not differ significantly from what they would be in the case of a truly independent stock.⁴

In some cases, stocks may be structured as “metapopulations” – systems in which local populations (= sub-populations) inhabit discrete habitat patches and inter-patch dispersal is neither so low as to negate significant demographic connectivity, nor so high as to eliminate any independence of local population (LP) dynamics⁵.

In these cases, the team should consider the connectivity between components of the metapopulation that defines the underlying source-sink dynamics and thereby clearly define the actual unit stock that is to be assessed against Principle 1.

Connectivity patterns range from a well-mixed larval pool (maximal connectivity) at one extreme to a collection of closed self-sustaining populations (minimal connectivity) at the other. However, most situations are intermediate to these two extremes. Connectivity is rarely symmetrical, and larval flows between 2 subpopulations will nearly always be stronger in a direction with maximum asymmetry found in non-reproductive pseudo-populations (absolute sinks). Source-sink models describe a situation where larvae or adults from source locations supplement less-productive sink areas. In a sink location, reproduction is insufficient to balance local mortality, and the LP therefore persists only because it receives immigration from more productive sources. Source locations are considered net exporters of individuals whereas sinks are net importers of individuals.

The degree of self-recruitment and connectivity among sub-populations dictates the specific management required to achieve a sustainable harvest. Where management recognises a metapopulation, it may need to ensure that fishing effort and catches consider the abundance or biomass at each local population.

In cases where fisheries are targeting a mixture of LPs that cannot be clearly separated, a practical management approach may be to consider the whole metapopulation as the unit stock. In this case, more precautionary reference points or other adjustments to the harvest strategy may be needed to allow for uncertainties in the stock structure. However, where appropriate and justified, 1 or more LPs can also be designated as the unit stock(s) on which the outcome and harvest strategy components are to be assessed.

Teams should be alert to the special issues of metapopulation in assessing a fishery. At the time of reporting on the fishery assessment, teams should include detailed information in the assessment reports, clarifying whether the unit stock is based on 1 or more LPs or on a metapopulation as a whole. Details should be provided on the appropriateness of the level of assessment and management chosen, explaining:

- In the case that management is based on the whole metapopulation, how it is expected to avoid local depletion.
- If based on 1 or more local populations, whether these are believed to be sources or sinks, the relationship among subpopulations and how management avoids over exploitation within both the selected local populations and more broadly in the whole metapopulation.

Table G2 describes the level of assessment expected and considerations for scoring the stock outcome and harvest strategy components of a unit stock for a normal ‘single population’ stock (case

³ Maguire, J.-J.; Sissenwine, M.; Csirke, J.; Grainger, R.; Garcia, S. (2006). The state of world highly migratory, straddling and other high seas fishery resources and associated species. FAO Fisheries Technical Paper. No. 495. Rome: FAO. 84p

⁴ Gulland, J.A. (1983). Fish stock assessment. A manual of basic methods. Chichester, John Wiley and Sons, FAO/Wiley series on food and agriculture. Vol. 1: 223 pp

⁵ Sale PF, Hanski I, Kritzer JP (2006). The merging of metapopulation theory and marine ecology: establishing the historical context. In: Kritzer JP, Sale PF (Eds) Marine Metapopulations. Chapter 1. Elsevier, Amsterdam: 3-28

A), and for 3 different forms of metapopulations (cases B, C and D). Teams should note that 'harmonisation' between Principle 1 assessments would normally be expected only in cases where 2 fisheries are fully overlapping in their definition of the unit stock. Fisheries on 2 separate LPs within a wider metapopulation, for example, need not have harmonised outcomes.

Table G2: Level of assessment expected and considerations when scoring the stock outcome and harvest strategy components of a unit stock for different forms of metapopulation

Stock structure	Description (degree of connectivity and self-recruitment)	Implications for management of the Stock (assessment of Outcome and Harvest Strategy)
A. Single population	<p>Completely isolated. Self-contained with no emigration or immigration of individuals from or to the stock. Occupies a well-defined spatial range and is independent of other stocks of the same species.</p>	<p>Whole population. Fishing on the population has no effect on the dynamics of neighbouring populations. Normal expectations may apply for reference points. The fishery must manage the stock above the point of recruitment impairment (PRI) to ensure recruitment is sustained.</p>
B. Local population with partial isolation	<p>Partially isolated and minimal connectivity. Self-sustaining. The degree of connectivity with other LPs in the metapopulation is so weak that, for management purposes, it can be considered a self-sustaining population. This may be true even if occasional larval exchanges between LPs are enough to maintain a certain degree of genetic flow and homogeneity.</p>	<p>Local population. Fishing on the local population appears to have no effect on the dynamics of neighbouring populations. Normal expectations may apply for reference points. The fishery must manage its own local unit stock above a point of recruitment impairment (PRI) to ensure recruitment is sustained. Requires information on the biology of the species, larval dispersal, source-sink dynamics, and oceanographic conditions supporting management at a local level. Information and uncertainties related to stock structure need to be scored in Performance Indicators (PIs) 1.2.2, 1.2.3 and 1.2.4.</p>
C. Local population (s) with moderate connectivity within the meta-population	<p>Moderate connectivity. The degree of connectivity between LPs is enough to maintain genetic flow and some degree of homogeneity. Source-sink dynamics with variable degree of self-recruitment. Sources of recruits act as core areas in the species range where the species occurs in all years and where the typical age composition exhibits regular recruitment patterns with multiple age classes present. There may be sinks where occasional individuals or low densities usually occur and where populations typically</p>	<p>Local population(s). Fishing on local populations affects the dynamics of neighbouring populations. Fishing and the management decision affecting upstream populations will have impacts on the components downstream. Local populations are not entirely in control of their productivity. The fishery must manage its own local unit stock above a PRI to ensure recruitment is sustained, but reference points also need to take into account connections with and dependences on neighbouring local populations. Per recruit reference points (e.g. percentage spawners per recruit) may confirm the good management of the fishery to contribute to the wider surrounding populations. Separate monitoring of absolute reference points (either of incoming recruitment or of local population</p>

Stock structure	Description (degree of connectivity and self-recruitment)	Implications for management of the Stock (assessment of Outcome and Harvest Strategy)
	<p>consist of only 1 or a few age groups, often of old individuals.</p>	<p>levels) may also be needed to confirm that the inputs of external recruitment are being sustained. Requires information on the biology of the species, larval dispersal, source-sink dynamics, and oceanographic conditions supporting management at local level. Information and uncertainties related to stock structure need to be scored in PIs 1.2.2, 1.2.3 and 1.2.4.</p>
<p>D. Local populations with maximum connectivity within the metapopulation</p>	<p>Maximum connectivity. Metapopulation is panmictic (mating is random within the entire metapopulation). Subpopulations are arbitrary. Well-mixed larval pool.</p>	<p>Whole metapopulation. Fishing on local populations affects the dynamics of neighbouring populations. The fishery must manage the whole metapopulation (unit stock) above a PRI to ensure that recruitment is sustained. Special attention may be needed in setting reference points to ensure that the LP structure is not affected by fishing. Scored against the whole metapopulation. Information and uncertainties related to stock structure need to be scored in PIs 1.2.2, 1.2.3 and 1.2.4.</p>

G7.5.4 Definition of UoA at time of fishing ▲

The UoA must be defined based on the gears that are used. It is not possible to define a UoA based on the species caught as observed at the time of landing. All potential impacts of the UoA from all hauls or landings that are defined as having been taken by the gear type and in the area defined in the UoA must be included in the assessment. What should be avoided is defining the UoA based on, for instance, a subset of hauls that are defined as targeting a Principle 1 species and for which a calculation of the proportion of the catch that includes that Principle 1 species is required.

G7.5.5 Changes to UoC/UoA ▲

The CAB is required to define the target species that will be covered by the UoA when announcing that a fishery is entering assessment. In other words, the client nominates the fish species on which they seek to put the MSC ecolabel, as well as the fishery for which they seek certification.

MSC acknowledges that most fisheries catch more than a single species of commercial value with the same gear type, in the same location and at the same time, unavoidably or where separation is not commercially feasible without significant additional effort.

In such cases, a client may want to propose multiple species for consideration under Principle 1, but the CAB may not have sufficient information to confirm whether that species is best assessed under Principle 1 or Principle 2 until after the site visit. Therefore a CAB may confirm the species to be assessed under Principle 1 after the site visit to be formally confirmed within the Public Comment Draft Report, see 7.17.3.

Any species that was proposed in the UoA but is not assessed there in the Public Comment Draft Report must be assessed under Principle 2. Species confirmed as assessed under Principle 1 may each be the subject of a separate UoA or may each be scoring elements within a single UoA.

G7.5.6 Geographical area of the fishery ▲

This is a description of the geographic area within which the fishery is undertaken. It should include the following:

- FAO Major Fishing Area, identified by name and two-digit code (www.fao.org/cwp-on-fishery-statistics/handbook)
- Commonly used name for the body of water (e.g. North Sea).
- Local fisheries management area (e.g. ICES divisions VI, VII, and VIII abc).
- Stock region, which may be all or part of the biological stock unit assessed in Principle 1.

In defining the geographic area, the CAB should consider the fishery client's ability to track and trace to it, as per 7.5.7 (initial traceability risk assessment) and 7.9 (Determination of the traceability systems and point(s) at which fish and fish products enter further certified Chains of Custody).

G7.5.7 Review of traceability factors ▲

This section considers the systems of tracking and tracing within the fishery and acts as an initial review for the CAB to determine whether there are substantial substitution risks that will need to be managed (for example, in cases where the UoC covers only specific gears or vessels). The intent is to help ensure that the client has adequate time to understand the traceability requirements needed for the MSC and put systems in place before the fishery is certified. Risk factors to be considered at this stage include the possibility of vessels using non-certified gears, fishing outside the geographical region included in the UoA/UoC, or the chance of other non-certified fisheries fishing the same stock. Any other risks of substitution that may occur between point of harvest and point of sale, such as transshipment, sale via auctions, etc., should also be documented in this section.

G7.5.7.2 Notification of obligation to meet traceability requirements ▲

Fisheries may have systems in place to manage traceability but may not be fully aware of MSC traceability requirements until later in the assessment process, particularly if the UoC does not cover the entire fishery. The intention of this requirement is to enable clear communication with the client group so that they are aware of the traceability requirements early in the assessment process. Key traceability risks can be documented, and the client will have more time to implement traceability solutions during the remainder of the assessment process.

G7.5.8 Other eligible fishers and entities and certificate sharing ▲

The MSC has the following intent regarding its certification program and certificate sharing:

- To minimise the number of overlapping assessments requiring harmonisation.
- To encourage the largest proportion of fishers to enter at the start of the full assessment process, but when only a select group of fishers within a fishery wants to undertake MSC assessment, to allow them to proceed so as not to delay certification.
- To ensure that the process is clear and transparent to interested parties.

This arrangement defines which other eligible fishers may gain access to the fishery certificate, if and when the fishery is certified.

Certificate-sharing mechanisms developed in existing MSC fisheries include a number of arrangements, such as the provision of unrestricted access to the certificate, providing that certification and surveillance costs:

- Are shared fairly and equitably with all participants.
- Are met through the payment of a landing levy or some other approach agreed within the client group, and/or
- That all product is initially sold to the certificate holder.

The MSC recognises the role of individual fishery clients in devising mechanisms that are appropriate to their circumstances. There are no formal, mandatory arrangements for the development of certificate-sharing mechanisms.

Guidance is provided below, not as firm 'direction', but rather as suggestions to clients and their potential partners for their use and/or inclusion in any certificate-sharing mechanisms. The CAB may wish to provide the advice in Box G1 to fisheries.

Box G1: The MSC's advice on allocating costs of certificate sharing

The MSC provides this non-binding advice to certificate holders on the sharing of certificate costs. The CAB may wish to provide this information to those involved in certificate sharing.

When a client allows access to a certificate and seeks proportional reimbursement of the initial costs paid either as a one-off payment or as an ongoing cost-sharing mechanism, this guidance is offered as to how these costs could be calculated. Costs may include the following:

- Direct costs paid to a CAB.
- Direct costs incurred by the client in managing or facilitating the assessment.
- Cost of the client's time spent managing/facilitating the assessment process.
- Risk premium, a maximum of 20% of the other assessment costs.

If costs additional to those identified above are included in the proposed certificate-sharing mechanism, they must be documented and justified in any and all communication regarding the proposed sharing mechanism.

Allowable costs would not be expected to include any grant or subsidy made to the client to cover the costs incurred during the assessment, except where a proportion of such grants or subsidies are subsequently repaid.

The direct costs and the time costs incurred by the client in managing or facilitating the assessment may either be costed directly from the client's accounts or estimated as a simple overhead rate.

Where the direct and time costs are to be estimated from the client's accounts, the CAB will make full details available to other fishers seeking to gain entry to the certificate. If audited accounts detailing these costs are required, the other eligible fishers will pay the costs incurred in conducting such audits. The cost of the client's time will be based on the earnings records for the individuals involved and time inputs recorded and substantiated by the client.

Where the client's direct and time costs are to be estimated according to an overhead rate, this rate should not exceed 30% of the fees paid to the CAB. In this case, the following formula is suggested for calculating the overall cost to be shared:

$$(\text{Costs} \times \text{overhead}) \times \text{risk premium}$$

Where the rates for the overhead and risk premium are set at the proposed upper limits of 30% and 20%, respectively, the overall cost would be calculated from the following formula:

$$((\text{Direct cost paid to the CAB less any cost paid for a consultant}) \times 1.3) \times 1.2$$

Costs (both for entry and maintenance to the certificate, including the fulfilment of conditions) would be apportioned to the new entrant(s) seeking certification in accordance to the mechanism.

Examples could include, but are not limited to, a pro rata sharing of costs based on:

- The number of vessels (or operators) or processing or marketing entities seeking entry as a proportion of those documented as originally included in the UoC, or
- The quota held by the new vessel(s) (or operators) or processing or marketing entities seeking entry, as a proportion of those documented as originally included in the UoC, or
- The increase in fishing power of new vessel(s) (or operators) or processing or marketing capacity seeking entry pro rata to those documented as originally included in the UoC.

In the event that additional fishers or processing or marketing entities seek to join the certificate after an initial and successful certificate-sharing negotiation, a rebate may be due to those that joined the certificate previously. Alternatively, potential costs may be apportioned between all the fishers that are potentially eligible to share the certificate, and payments made by sub-sets of fishers only in proportion to their share of the overall costs (thus avoiding the need for rebates if other fishers join later). Such cost-sharing mechanisms will be detailed to stakeholders when an assessment is undertaken.

G7.5.9 Inseparable or practicably inseparable (IPI) stock(s) ▲

The intent of the requirements for inseparable or practicably inseparable (IPI) stocks is to create incentives to promote the improved management of non-target stock(s) (e.g. bring to Principle 1 level of performance or encourage mechanisms for catch separation), and to allow a defined and limited proportion of catches of IPI stock(s) to enter further certified Chains of Custody, and to use the MSC ecolabel.

The requirements for IPI stock(s) acknowledge that Principle 2 catch can be practicably inseparable from the Principle 1 catch during normal fishing operations. For example, the Principle 2 catch may be from a stock of the same species, or a closely related species. As an extreme example, the Principle 2 species may only be distinguishable by the number of gill rakers or the number of rays in the caudal fin. These requirements also acknowledge that, even when the Principle 2 catch is distinguishable, it may not be commercially feasible to separate the catch (i.e. significant modification to existing harvesting and processing methods would be required).

The intent of the IPI requirements is to incentivise management of these species to Principle 1 level, or to encourage mechanism for separation. As a result, IPI is only valid for 1 certification period, unless the proportion is <2%.

Requirements for IPI stock(s) are designed to improve consistency in the application of the MSC Fisheries Certification Process. The requirements on IPI stock(s) vary based on the percentage in the catch:

- If the proportion of IPI catches to total target + IPI catches is less than or equal to 2%, the CAB must make an assessment that the UoA does not create a significant impact on the IPI stock but is not required to apply Annex PA and is not required to make a further determination of status under Principle 2. Even though this is the case, effectively the IPI stock is held to the same requirement as Principle 2, in that the fishery should not be creating a significant impact on the IPI stock.
- If the proportion is greater than 2% and less than 15%, Annex PA must be applied in its entirety, which includes an assessment against Principle 2 Primary or Secondary species Performance Indicators (PIs) and considering the impact of all fishing activity.

Note that the MSC restricts the application of the requirements for IPI stocks to a fishery certification to 1 certification period. At reassessment, either IPI stock(s) should be separated from target stock(s), or the proportion of IPI should be reduced to 2%; the only alternative is to assess IPI stock(s) against Principle 1.

G7.7 Preparing for the Announcement Comment Draft Report ▲

G7.7.1 Fishery with enhanced stock ▲

Background

The intent is that management systems exist to control exploitation rates on wild stocks in order to allow for self-sustaining, locally adapted wild stocks (i.e. adequate wild stock levels that can perpetuate themselves at harvestable levels on a continuing basis – consistent with Principle 1). The management of enhancement activities related to the fishery should not prevent the ability of wild stocks to sustain themselves at their optimum levels, according to their natural habitat-related and biologically based productive capacities.

G7.7.1.2.b Extent of translocations ▲

For these requirements, translocation does not include the transfer of species to a production area from outside the distribution of their natural range. The latter should be considered as an introduction of a species, to be considered under [MSC Fisheries Standard Annex SD](#).

The extent of translocation must be considered to ensure that the fishery enhancement programs predominantly utilise stocks or populations that are native to the natural production area from which the fishery's catch originates.

The means of confirming that fish are “native” to a fishery production area (i.e. from within the ‘natural range’) may not be simple except in cases where no movement occurs.

Performance Indicators (PIs) may need to be developed to determine the extent of movement within a range that can be considered to have acceptably low risks. Related performance assessment will require the identification of the ‘natural production area’ or genetic range of a stock.

Translocation of fish in enhanced fisheries should ensure that fisheries maintain the diversity, structure, and function of the ecosystem on which they depend while minimising any adverse effects. Inadequately managed translocations of fish between different areas may have both genetic and other impacts that need to be assessed (e.g. the spread of diseases between areas, accidental species introductions, etc.).

G7.7.1.2.c.i Feed augmentation ▲

The issues of feed augmentation and the use of medicines or other chemical compounds are not currently covered by the [MSC Fisheries Standard](#).

Where feeding or disease prevention are used in HAC systems, or where other interventions are used in CAG systems (e.g. fertilisation to enhance natural food availability, removal of predators or competitors, either to maximise capture or minimise post-capture mortality), assessments must confirm that these activities do not have serious negative impacts on other species or the wild environment. Such assessment would be included in the Principle 2 scoring for the fishery.

G7.7.1.2.d Habitat modification ▲

Consideration is required as to the cumulative impacts of multiple production operations, areas, facilities, systems etc. within a geographical region.

For example, a small mussel rope facility may have minimal impact on the natural ecosystem's structure and function but filling a whole bay with such structures may have much greater impacts.

Consideration is needed for those situations where an individual operation is the subject of an assessment under the MSC Program but is only 1 of several similar operations in a finite space. The assessment should consider whether the cumulative impacts of a particular production system are likely to cause serious or irreversible harm to the natural ecosystem's structure and function.

G7.7.3 Use of the risk-based methods for a data-deficient fishery ▲

The RBF should not be used to score a PI unless the answer to any of the questions in Table 3 is “no”. Where it is not yet clear whether a scoring element under either Principle 1 or Principle 2 meets the criteria in Table 3, the use of the Risk-Based Framework (RBF) should be announced to stakeholders and the site visit planned assuming that an RBF assessment will be needed. See also GPF2.1.

For fish species, stock status reference points should be treated as biologically based limits when using Table 3 to determine whether scoring elements are data-deficient.

G7.7.3.3 Data-deficient scoring elements ▲

A list of scoring elements within the fishery should be available when making the decision on whether a PI is data-deficient or not. A full list of scoring elements may not be known and/or may change following the site visit. This should be considered when making the decision as to whether the PI is data-deficient or not.

For Principle 1, there will normally only be 1 scoring element, the target species under assessment. For Principle 2, scoring elements are the different species or different habitat types being affected by the fishery.

See Annex PF for more guidance on use of the RBF.

G7.7.3.4 Uncertainties in stock definition ▲

In Table 3, analytical stock assessments are based on mathematical models that use defined theoretical biological underpinnings to develop reference points.

Empirical approaches use indicator data and make logical inferences about more technical reference points without drawing on mathematical model-based techniques.

Stock uncertainties are scored instead in the information or stock assessment PIs (1.2.3 or 1.2.4).

G7.8 Determination of eligibility date ▲

Background

The MSC developed requirements on eligibility dates to clarify the date from when the MSC ecolabel could be used on fishery products caught before the eventual fishery certificate date and to promote consistency of approach across fisheries. The intent of a flexible eligibility date is to:

- Outline the situations under which fishery products caught before the date of certification of a fishery may be considered to have come from a sustainable fishery and be eligible for use of the MSC ecolabel.
- Allow fisheries to use the MSC ecolabel and make claims for fish products that are sold after the fishery certificate is awarded, but that are caught before this date.
- Ensure that the MSC Chain of Custody is maintained and ensure that only products from certified fisheries use the MSC ecolabel.

G7.8.1.1 Eligibility date ▲

The “eligibility date” is the date from which the CAB determines that product from the certified fishery will be eligible to enter the supply chain. The eligibility date is confirmed in the Public Comment Draft Report.

In cases where the UoC could potentially change (e.g. due to some regions or fishing gears being omitted at a late stage), or where there could be further delays to the assessment process, the CAB may want to set the eligibility date as the certification date, rather than the Public Comment Draft Report date.

In cases where the eligibility date is set before the certification date, the CAB will need to consider any potential traceability impacts – and, for example, the risk of product from outside the UoC being incorrectly identified as an under-assessment product. As a result, CABs should verify traceability and identification systems before the eligibility date.

Fisheries handling under-assessment product should be aware of relevant requirements in the Chain of Custody standard, which relate to identification and traceability of under-assessment product.

G7.9 Assessment of the traceability systems and determination of the point(s) at which fish and fish products enter certified Chains of Custody ▲

Background

Fisheries often have robust systems in place to manage traceability, through regulatory or voluntary controls. However, these systems may not be sufficient for differentiating between certified and non-certified products, especially if the UoC only covers specific vessels or gear types. The intention of this section is to enable clearer documentation of the traceability systems in place for a certified fishery and to make clear how substitution risks are adequately controlled by the fishery.

G7.9.1 Traceability record keeping ▲

Traceability systems need to be sufficient to allow the fishery to trace MSC certified sales back to the UoC, for example in the event of a product traceback carried out by the MSC or an investigation into an MSC supply chain.

It is recommended that records demonstrating traceability back to the UoC should be kept for at least 2 years where practicable to allow a product from the supply chain to be traced back to the UoC.

Traceability records can be maintained by fishers, the fishery client group, auctions or other entities, depending on the management of the fishery and the point at which subsequent Chain of Custody begins.

G7.9.1.2–4 Traceability ▲

The intent of this section is to ensure that all fishery reports clearly identify risks of substitution or mislabelling of certified products and explain how these risks are mitigated by the traceability systems and controls in place.

Mitigation measures can include existing regulatory and traceability controls, such as logbooks, but should consider whether these systems are sufficient to ensure traceability back to the UoC. If not, additional systems or controls may need to be implemented.

Several possible risk factors exist:

- **The possibility that non-certified gears are used within the UoA**

This relates to cases where vessels within the UoA may use gear types that are not included in the UoC. In some cases, this can happen on the same trip where certified gears are used or can happen on different trips. This can lead to a greater risk of mixing between certified and non-certified product on vessels or at points of landing, and the UoA needs adequate systems in place to segregate and identify the certified catch from non-certified catch.

- **The possibility of vessels from the UoC fishing outside the UoC or in different geographical areas (on the same trips or different trips)**

This factor concerns the potential for vessels to fish in non-certified geographical regions (which may also be affected by fishing-season or temporal restrictions). This can lead to a greater risk of mixing between certified and non-certified product on vessels or at points of landing. The UoA will need to demonstrate how traceability and control systems (such as VMS or logbooks) help to ensure that only product caught within the UoC will be identified and sold as MSC certified.

- **The possibility of vessels from outside the UoC or client group fishing the same stock**

This factor relates to the likelihood that other, non-certified fishers may catch the same stock, which could produce higher risks of substitution or mislabelling at the point of landing or sale (for example, where certified and non-certified catches are sold at the same auction).

- **Any other risks of substitution between fish from the UoC and fish from outside this unit**

This refers to any other points at harvest, on the vessel, during transshipment, or at points of landing or sale where there is the potential risk of substitution between non-certified and certified products. This includes also the presence of other nearby fisheries activities or other fisheries which may land or tranship non-certified product alongside certified catches. This assessment should consider the presence of these risks and specifically how they are addressed by the traceability systems in place.

G7.9.1.5 Where does Chain of Custody start? ▲

Clear information on the UoC must be available to stakeholders and particularly any party purchasing certified product from the fishery client. The change of ownership relates to the first point of sale. Any specific conditions related to eligibility of product from the UoC to bear the MSC ecolabel should be clearly stated in this section (for example, if roe is not considered within the UoC).

Where the UoC involves the activities of entities such as agents at markets or auctions, or unloaders/offloaders at the point of landing, the report should state whether this activity is covered by the fishery certificate. In these cases, Chain of Custody could be required to start from the point of sale by the agent or offloader/unloader, rather than from the first sale by the fishery. However, if activities of agents or offloaders/unloaders are covered by the fishery certificate, the traceability systems used by these operators need to be assessed and documented in the report. The report should also list the specific operators covered, the eligibility criteria, or where to find this information.

G7.9.4 Chain of Custody ▲

This section provides consistency with the requirements for Chain of Custody certificate holders. Fisheries have a responsibility to ensure that any non-eligible (non-conforming) product that enters the supply chain is identified, and downstream supply chain companies are appropriately notified. For example, if product from outside the UoC is accidentally labelled or sold as MSC certified, the UoA would need to take action in line with this procedure.

G7.10 Announcement Comment Draft Report ▲

The MSC's intent is that the drafting of the Announcement Comment Draft Report is a desk-based exercise using information provided in the Client Document Checklist, but additional resources that are readily available can also be used. For an initial assessment, information available in pre-assessments or from Fishery Improvement Projects (FIPs) may be used. For a reassessment, information in the previous Public Certification Report and surveillance audit reports may be used. The Announcement Comment Draft Report provides indicative scoring and rationales, and identifies where more information is needed.

One of the objectives of the Announcement Comment Draft Report is to assist the site visit by facilitating stakeholder input to the assessment prior to the site visit, and to ensure the CAB, the client and stakeholders are better informed and prepared for the site visit.

G7.10.1 Preparing the Announcement Comment Draft Report ▲

The MSC does not expect assessment teams to conduct stakeholder interviews or site visits for the purposes of completing the Announcement Comment Draft Report. If a CAB elects to conduct stakeholder interviews or site visits during the drafting of the Announcement Comment Draft Report, it will not count towards meeting the requirements under Section 7.16.

G7.10.2.e Draft scoring ranges ▲

Where limited information is available to score a draft scoring range for a Performance Indicator, the assessment team should be more precautionary in their assessment, and assign a draft scoring range no higher than 60-79 (see [Guidance to the MSC Fisheries Standard](#)). If there is no information then the draft scoring range for the relevant PI should be <60, the draft rationale should state that there is no information and the information gap should be highlighted. If the use of the RBF has been identified and the CAB has not conducted the RBF during the preparation of the ACDR (there is no requirement to do so) the draft scoring range for the relevant PI should be <60, the draft rationale should state that the RBF will be applied during the assessment and as such there is no information at this time, and the information gap should be highlighted. This should include the information needed to conduct the RBF.

G7.12 Announcement of fishery assessment ▲

G7.12.3.1 Timelines for announcement ▲

Stakeholders should be contacted prior to the full assessment being announced to co-ordinate a date for the site visit that ensures the highest level of attendance. There may be some instances where stakeholders cannot be engaged ahead of announcing the full assessment; and in such instances, the CAB may elect to postpone the announcement of the site visit date until stakeholders have been engaged in the process.

G7.12.4.b Pre-assessment reports uploaded to database ▲

The MSC will maintain confidentiality of pre-assessment reports. The client may require that the MSC sign a confidentiality agreement.

G7.12.5 Modifications to the default tree ▲

In making changes to the default tree, teams should consider writing PIs in a way that can result in an appropriate time-bounded condition being easily prepared. Quantitative PIs could be used, where appropriate.

For example:

- Potential biological removals (PBR) of marine mammals – where fishing activity does not impede the recovery rate of populations.
- Maximum sustainable yield (MSY) – the fishery is at or above MSY or biomass at maximum sustainable yield (B_{MSY}) or some other variation of an appropriate fisheries management reference point.

G7.14 Peer Review College ▲

The MSC has set up a Peer Review College to fulfil the following objectives:

- Increase the independence of peer reviews of fishery assessments.
- Increase the quality and consistency of peer reviews, and the reliability of their use by CABs, stakeholders and independent adjudicators.
- Not to increase, and if possible reduce, the cost of peer reviewers to fishery clients undergoing assessment.

The CAB will need to request peer reviewers from the College according to the requirements set out in Section 7.14. The operations of the College are described separately to this guidance. Peer reviewers will have similar competencies to auditors.

G7.14.3.b Proposed peer reviewers after the site visit ▲

Following the site visit, the Peer Review College will ensure that all registered stakeholders are proactively invited to comment on the potential conflicts of interest of the proposed peer reviewers for a period of 10 days. The College will review any conflicts of interest highlighted by stakeholders, in accordance with the procedures outlined in the FCP.

If stakeholders do not agree with the Peer Review College's determination on conflict of interest, they have the right to appeal to the Peer Review College who shall inform MSC within 10 working days. The MSC will appoint a third party to conduct a review of the decision. The outcome of the review will be communicated to the Peer Review College by the MSC Executive with instructions on how the College should proceed.

Once the consultation and appeals process is complete and the Peer Review College has acted as directed by the third party, the CAB and stakeholders will be informed of the decision that no conflict of interest exists for the peer reviewers appointed to conduct the peer review.

G7.14.5 Final decision peer reviewers ▲

The CAB can express a preference for individual reviewers to be contracted from a shortlist drawn up by the Peer Review College but the Peer Review College will make the final decision.

G7.15 Stakeholder input on the Announcement Comment Draft Report ▲

G7.15.5 Publish stakeholder input on the Announcement Comment Draft Report ▲

The CAB should upload the stakeholder input in a timely manner to the MSC database for publication on the MSC website. The purpose of publication is to keep the stakeholders informed before the site visit about what has been raised. Additionally, the stakeholder input is useful for the assessment team to prepare the site visit.

G7.16 Site visit: team attendance ▲

The full assessment team should attend all the meetings at the site visit. Where this could cause unreasonable cost or inconvenience, and where the assessment would not be adversely affected by some team members participating remotely, the CAB may submit a variation request.

G7.16.1 Additional site visits ▲

The team may require further site visits by 1 or more team members where information is not available or assembled by the client or stakeholders in time for the first assessment visit to adequately assess and analyse the evidence.

G7.17 Scoring the fishery ▲

Background

This is the stage at which evaluation of the information gathered in the formal assessment occurs and scores are assigned and justified.

Note: Guidance for scoring the fishery using the RBF is covered under Guidance for Annex PF.

G7.17.1-2 Scoring decision ▲

The MSC's intent with 7.17.1 and 7.17.2 is that the scoring of the UoA is agreed by the full team appointed by the CAB. Although individual team members may lead on the scoring of a Principle (Principle 1, Principle 2 or Principle 3), their conclusions should be agreed in discussion with the team as a whole. Discussions on scoring may begin at the site visit but may often not be completed until after the team has dispersed, when virtual interactions may be needed (e.g. by teleconference and exchange of emails).

G7.17.5.1 Smaller scoring intervals ▲

Scores may need to be assigned in intervals smaller than 5 when considering complexity generated by multiple scoring issues and scoring elements.

G7.17.7.3 Terms used ▲

In considering the scoring of individual PIs based on the performance of different scoring elements, the terms below should be used:

- **Few:** Most of the scoring issues should be taken to indicate 'minority: majority' or 'less than half: greater than half' (e.g. if there were 3 or 4 scoring issues, the ratios '1:2' and '1:3' would be represented by the terms 'few: most').
- **Some:** "Some" should be taken to indicate a roughly equal split of scoring issues.

G7.17.8 Weighting ▲

Table G3 below shows the default weighting when using the default tree.

Note: this information can be found in the MSC Fishery Assessment Default Scoring Worksheet on the MSC website.

Table G3: Default weighting to be applied when using the default assessment tree

Principle weight	Component weight	PI		Weight within component and Principle		
1	Outcome 0.333	1.1.1	Stock Status	EITHER		
				1	0.333	
				OR		
		0.5	0.167			
		1.1.2	Stock Rebuilding	EITHER		
				0	0	
	OR					
	0.5	0.167				
	Management 0.667		1.2.1	Harvest Strategy	0.25	0.167
			1.2.2	Harvest Control Rules & Tools	0.25	0.167
1.2.3			Information & Monitoring	0.25	0.167	
1.2.4			Assessment of Stock Status	0.25	0.167	
2	Primary species 0.2	2.1.1	Outcome	0.333	0.067	
		2.1.2	Management	0.333	0.067	
		2.1.3	Information	0.333	0.067	
	Secondary species	2.2.1	Outcome	0.333	0.067	
		2.2.2	Management	0.333	0.067	

	0.2	2.2.3	Information	0.333	0.067
	ETP species 0.2	2.3.1	Outcome	0.333	0.067
		2.3.2	Management	0.333	0.067
		2.3.3	Information	0.333	0.067
	Habitats species 0.2	2.4.1	Outcome	0.333	0.067
		2.4.2	Management	0.333	0.067
		2.4.3	Information	0.333	0.067
	Ecosystem 0.2	2.5.1	Outcome	0.333	0.067
		2.5.2	Management	0.333	0.067
		2.5.3	Information	0.333	0.067
3	Governance and Policy 0.5	3.1.1	Legal/Customary Framework	0.333	0.167
		3.1.2	Consultation, Roles & Responsibilities	0.333	0.167
		3.1.3	Long Term Objectives	0.333	0.167
	Fishery-specific management system 0.5	3.2.1	Fishery Specific Objectives	0.25	0.125
		3.2.2	Decision Making processes	0.25	0.125
		3.2.3	Compliance & Enforcement	0.25	0.125
		3.2.4	Management Performance Evaluation	0.25	0.125

G7.17.9.1 Scoring rationale ▲

Rationale for all scores is required to be explicitly documented in the report's text.

For an example, see below:

Example: Rationale for a score of 75 in Principle 2 (Primary species, Management PI 2.1.2)

The rationale for a score of 75 for PI 2.1.2 might read as follows:

There are 5 primary species.

- For 3 of them, catch by weight of that species is less than 5% of the UoA's total catch so they would not be considered 'main'. For these species, there is a management strategy in place, which is primarily designed for the fisheries that target these 3 species and that recognises limit reference points that are based on sensible assumptions about the stock. Although there is evidence that this strategy works in similar fisheries, it has not been fully tested in this UoA, nor is there evidence yet that the UoA is achieving its objective to maintain these species at or around B_{MSY} . None of the species is a shark so the shark finning scoring issue is not scored. All 3 species are landed and sold so the unwanted scoring issue is not triggered. As none of the species are 'main', they all meet the SG80 requirements and they meet the SG100 requirements for strategy but not the 2 scoring issues on management strategy evaluation and implementation. These 3 species would each score 85.
- A fourth species (hake) is a major target species of high value to another fishery and is assessed and managed rigorously. This species makes up 20% of the UoA catch, and quotas are applied to the UoA as well as to its major target fishery and are effectively monitored and enforced. It is landed and sold so the unwanted scoring issue is not triggered. This species meets the SG100 requirements.
- The fifth species is a deepwater species that is managed using reference points and robust harvest control rules and is well above its point of recruitment impairment. The species is not utilised, and most of the catch is thrown back with a high mortality rate. It is not a shark species. The UoA has reviewed current measures to minimise capture of this species as well as other measures. A cost-effective and practical measure was identified, but it has not yet

been implemented. This species meets all of the SG60 requirements and all but 1 of the SG80 requirements so would score 75.

Based on the Scoring Guideposts, in the above scenario, 3 of the species achieve a score of 85, 1 achieves a score of 100 and 1 achieves a score of 75. According to Table G7, all of the scoring elements meet the SG60 level, and most achieve higher performance at or exceeding the SG80 level. Only 1 does not achieve the SG80 level so using this table the appropriate overall PI score would be 75. This is because as stated in 7.17.10.a, if any single scoring element fails to meet the SG80 level the overall score for that element shall be less than 80 so that a condition is raised, regardless of the situation with regard to other elements, some of which may be at the SG100 level.

The rationale for this scoring result is shown in tabular form below.

Table G4: Example scoring rationale 1

Species	SG level	Scoring issue	Met?	Overall score
Minor 1 Minor 2 Minor 3	60	A	n/a	85
		B	n/a	85
		C	n/a	85
		D	n/a	
		E	n/a	
	80	A	n/a	
		B	n/a	
		C	n/a	
		D	n/a	
		E	n/a	
	100	A	Y	
		B	N	
		C	N	
		D	n/a	
		E	n/a	

Table G5: Example scoring rationale 2

Species	SG level	Scoring issue	Met?	Overall score
Hake	60	A	Y	100
		B	Y	
		C	Y	
		D	n/a	
		E	n/a	
	80	A	Y	
		B	Y	
		C	Y	
		D	n/a	
		E	n/a	
	100	A	Y	
		B	Y	
		C	Y	

		D	n/a	
		E	n/a	

Table G6: Example scoring rationale 3

Species	SG level	Scoring issue	Met?	Overall score
Deepwater	60	A	Y	75
		B	Y	
		C	Y	
		D	n/a	
		E	n/a	
	80	A	Y	
		B	Y	
		C	Y	
		D	n/a	
		E	N	
	100	A	Y	
		B	Y	
		C	Y	
		D	n/a	
		E	N	

Table G7: Example overall scoring rationale

Species	Score
Minor 1	85
Minor 2	85
Minor 3	85
Hake	100
Deepwater	75
OVERALL PI	75

G7.17.10.a Terms used ▲

In considering the scoring of individual PIs based on the performance of different scoring elements, the terms below should be used:

- Few: Most of the scoring elements should be taken to indicate ‘minority: majority’ or ‘less than half: greater than half’ (e.g. if there were 6 scoring elements, the ratios ‘1:5’ and ‘2:4’ would both be represented by the terms ‘few: most’).
- Some: “Some” should be taken to indicate a roughly equal split of scoring elements.

Examples: scoring elements

- In the situation where most elements did not meet the SG80 level, indicating an overall score of 65, but generally scored high intermediate scores, a higher overall score would be appropriate (e.g. 70); but if the elements score only low intermediate scores, then a score of 65 or below would remain appropriate.
- In the situation where only a few elements failed to achieve the SG80 level, suggesting an overall score of 75, but achieved low intermediate scores, a lower score (e.g. 70) would be appropriate.
- In the situation where some elements met the SG100 level but some only met the SG60 level, suggesting a score of 70, it may be appropriate to reflect the very high performance of some of the elements with an upwards adjustment to 75.

Scoring of minor species and habitats

For 'minor' species and habitats, SGs only exist at the SG100 level in some PIs (2.1.1-2.2.3; 2.4.1; 2.4.3). When scoring such minor species or habitats as scoring elements, the team should assume that the SG80 level is met by default, such that the scores are simply based on how many of the scoring issues that apply to 'minor' (or all) species/habitats are met at the SG100 level.

G7.18 Setting conditions ▲

Background

Conditions provide for agreed further improvement in the UoA and provide one of the bases for subsequent audit. They are intended to improve performance against the MSC Standard (target species status, maintenance of ecological function, and management system performance).

This is the stage at which evaluation of the information gathered in the formal assessment continues, and if scores of less than 80 are awarded, then measurable, outcome-oriented and time-bounded conditions of certification are prepared.

Conditions can be related to:

- Reducing uncertainty.
- Improving processes and/or implementation.
- Reducing risk.
- Improving outcomes.

These elements can be hierarchical and may be linked together in pursuing a longer-term outcome and potential continuous improvement.

G7.18.1.2 Drafting conditions ▲

CABs should draft conditions that articulate the outcome that needs to be achieved by the condition deadline. This should reflect the language used in the SG80 Performance Indicator Scoring Guidepost (PISG) and draw upon relevant text in the Fisheries Standard clauses (i.e. Annex SA clauses) and the guidance. CABs should not simply repeat the SG80 PISG.

G7.18.1.6 Exceptional circumstances ▲

Exceptional circumstances should be applied when a condition is first drafted during assessment and prior to certification, or at a surveillance audit if a new condition is raised.

Examples: exceptional circumstances

Examples of exceptional circumstances are the time taken for:

- Natural ecological functions and response times.
- Time required for relevant research to be funded, undertaken and published.

G7.19 Client and Peer Review Draft Report ▲

G7.19.5.a Address peer reviewer comments by CAB ▲

The team should provide clear explanations with evidence in the CAB response column of the Peer Reviewer Template to support the team's conclusion on whether they accept or reject each of the issues raised by the peer reviewer. The team should note that reviewers will have the right of reply to the team's conclusion during the Public Comment Draft Report stakeholder consultation in common with other peer review processes such as those used by scientific journals. The reviewer's reply would state whether they agreed or disagreed with the team's response as this could provide assistance to the [MSC Disputes Process](#). The CAB would be able to include a response to any peer reviewer follow-up comments made on the Public Comment Draft Report in the Public Certification Report.

G7.19.6 Report viewed by the client ▲

A period of up to 60 days is available for the client to consider the report and respond to it, but if the client response is received before the end of the 60-day period and the peer review is complete, the CAB can move on to the next assessment stage without waiting for the full 60 days to elapse.

G7.19.7 Preparation of the Client Action Plan by the client ▲

Specific parts of the Client Action Plan may cover more than 1 PI even though each PI must have its own condition. However, the Client Action Plan should refer to these specific conditions and their milestones.

The CAB should not be prescriptive about the means of meeting conditions. The fishery client may develop their own corrective actions and deal with a condition in their own way. The important points for the CAB are that the client must demonstrate to the CAB's satisfaction that a condition can be met and how the outcome or result will be (or has been) achieved.

G7.21 Determination ▲

The CAB should also refer to [Section 4.6](#) of the General Certification Requirements and ISO 17065 clause 7.6.

The determination is a recommendation by the team to the CAB's decision-making entity.

G7.22.3 CAB response to stakeholder input ▲

During the 30-day Public Comment Draft Report consultation, stakeholders may provide follow-up comments to the CAB's responses to their previous input.

Stakeholders may also provide input at Public Comment Draft Report stage on issues not previously raised by them, providing that the information the comments are based on was available on or before the site visit.

Figure G2 below illustrates the stages in the assessment process where stakeholders may provide input and CABs should respond.

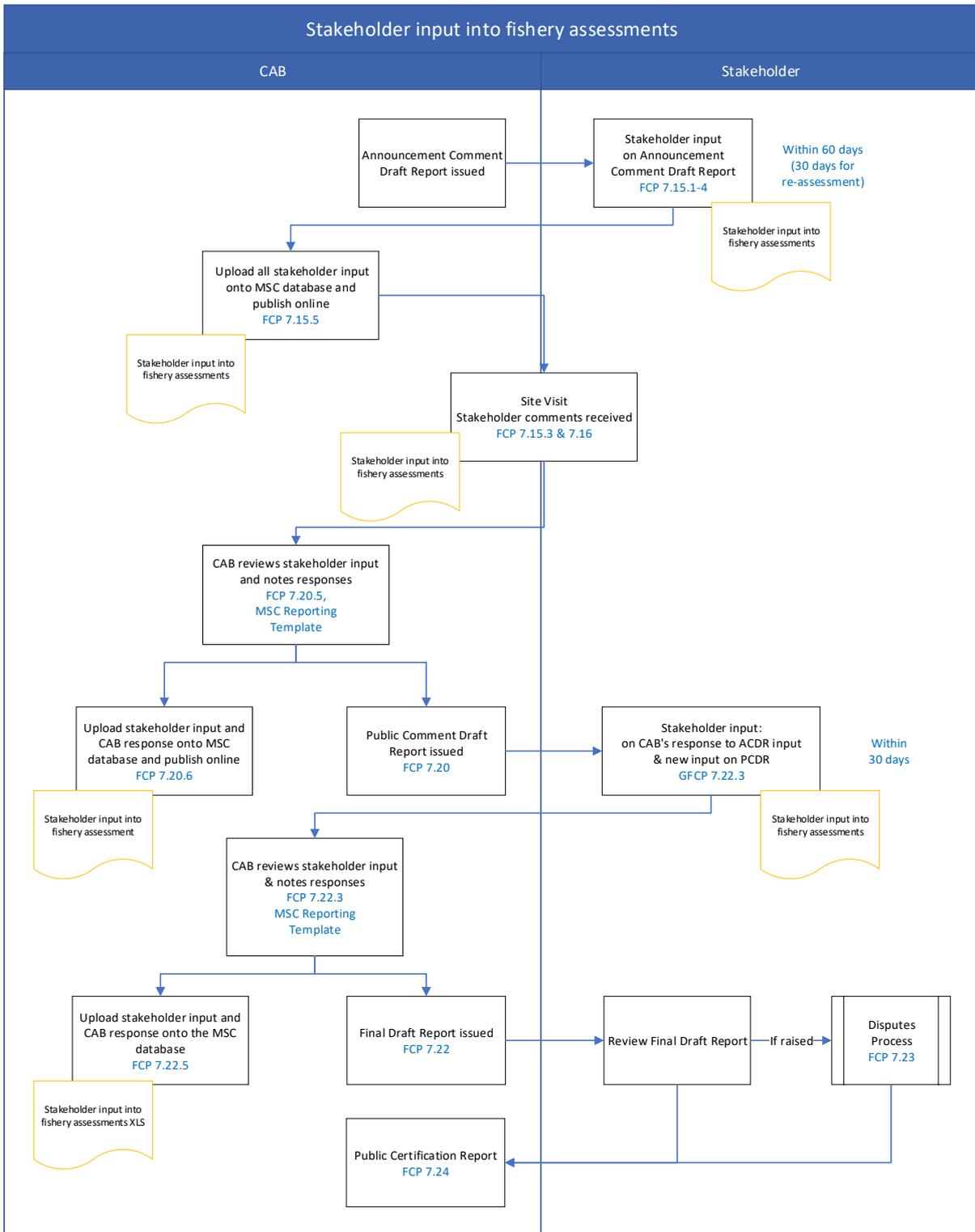


Figure G2: Stakeholder input opportunities and CAB response during the fishery assessment process. The yellow boxes show where the 'MSC Template for Stakeholder Input into Fishery Assessments' is utilised.

G7.25 Certification decision and certificate issue ▲

A fishery certificate is the formal document that is issued to a fishery client as evidence that a fishery is certified against the MSC Standard. The CAB should refer to [Section 4.6 of the MSC General Certification Requirements](#) and ISO 17065 clause 7.6.

G7.26 Fisheries that fail or withdraw from assessment

G7.26.5 Reporting ▲

The Announcement Comment Draft Report, Client and Peer Review Draft Report, Public Comment Draft Report, Final Draft Report and Public Certification Report must be provided in full and should not report only on elements revised between the initial and subsequent assessment of the fishery.

G7.27 Scope Extensions ▲

Background

This section provides for limited extensions to the scope of a fishery, as requested by the original fishery client, to include other fishing operations in the same area or an adjacent area. Such extensions may, for example, bring in a gear type or fleet of vessels that also targets the main Principle 1 species but was not included in the original assessment. The process also allows for the movement of a target species from Principle 2 to Principle 1, so that it can be included in the UoC from the fishery. Due to the assessment already undertaken, this option does not include all the steps of a normal full assessment. It is provided as an alternative, cost-effective assessment option for fishery clients in cases where a whole new assessment is not needed. In these instances, some form of certificate sharing will often be involved between the original and new fisheries.

G7.27.1.b Confirming the fisheries' eligibility for extension ▲

The MSC default assessment tree identifies 9 assessment “components”, as listed below:

- Principle 1 – Target species outcome (status); target species management.
- Principle 2 – Primary species; secondary species; ETP species; habitats; ecosystems.
- Principle 3 – Governance and policy; fishery specific management.

The UoA defines which species will be assessed against these components in Principle 1, which gears will be assessed in Principle 2, and which management areas and arrangements are assessed in Principle 3. 7.27.1.b allows that new UoAs would be eligible for extensions under this procedure in cases where there is some overlap with the species, gears, or areas in the original UoA. Where there is overlap, the assessment and scoring for 1 or more of the 9 assessment components listed above would be identical in the original and the new assessment.

G7.27.1.c Close geographical proximity ▲

This clause requires that the fishing operation proposed for extension should be conducted in either an overlapping or adjacent fishing area.

G7.27.4 Gap analysis ▲

The individual completing the gap analysis may use Table G8 below to provide justification for the outcome of the gap analysis to determine the assessment components that are held in common.

Example

The fishery may have the same target species, management system and gear but be fishing in a separate geographical area and be taking a different mix of ETP species, in which case ETP would have to be re-scored in the scope extension assessment.

Table G8: Justification for outcome of gap analysis

Component	UoA – Fishery 1 (identify the unit that is assessed for each component)	UoA – Fishery 2 (provide justification to confirm whether the unit proposed for extension is the same as the unit that was assessed in the certified fishery)
Principle 1 – Outcome	Target species stock + Management of target species stock	
Principle 1 – Harvest strategy	Target species stock + Management of target species stock	
Principle 2 – Primary species	Species normally retained by client gear type in client geographical area	
Principle 2 – Secondary species	Unintended bycatch of client gear type in client geographical area	
Principle 2 – ETP	ETP species bycatch of client gear type in client geographical area	
Principle 2 – Habitat	Habitat impact of client gear type in client geographical area	
Principle 2 – Ecosystem	Broad ecological community and ecosystem in which the fishery operates	
Principle 3 – Governance and policy	Overarching management framework Multi-jurisdictional management framework (as appropriate)	
Principle 3 – Fishery Specific management system	Local management framework + Client specific management	

G7.27.5 Adding new other eligible fishers ▲

Fishery clients sometimes fail to identify all of the possible ‘other eligible fishers’ that are included in an assessment even though their impacts have been considered. In this case, the CAB may belatedly extend the certificate to such fishers as long as the team confirms that the impacts were originally included. In cases where the original assessment did not include some other fishers (e.g. it was

restricted to only a few of the members of the fishing fleet), this option does not apply, and the scope extension process of Annex PE should be followed to consider the additional impacts in Principle 2.

G7.27.8 Condition timelines ▲

The UoA of the scope extension still has a full 5-year timeframe to close out any conditions raised. The extended UoA is thus considered an exceptional circumstance in line with 7.18.1.6. The CAB must state explicitly when the condition would expect to be closed in line with 7.18.1 and its sub-clauses. The maximum timeline for any new conditions would be 5 years in total (unless there are other 'exceptional circumstances').

G7.28 Surveillance ▲

G7.28.2 Surveillance levels ▲

Table G9: All possible combinations of surveillance level

Surveillance level	Years after certification or recertification				Number of auditors	
	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Year 4	Initial certification period	Subsequent certification period(s)
Level 6 Default surveillance	On-site surveillance audit	On-site surveillance audit	On-site surveillance audit	On-site surveillance audit & re-certification	2	1 or 2
Level 5 (3 on-site, 1 off-site)	On-site surveillance audit	<i>Off-site surveillance audit</i>	On-site surveillance audit	On-site surveillance audit & re-certification	2	1 or 2
	<i>Off-site surveillance audit</i>	On-site surveillance audit	On-site surveillance audit	On-site surveillance audit & re-certification	2	1 or 2
	On-site surveillance audit	On-site surveillance audit	<i>Off-site surveillance audit</i>	On-site surveillance audit & re-certification	2	1 or 2
Level 4 (2 on-site, 2 off-site)	<i>Off-site surveillance audit</i>	On-site surveillance audit	<i>Off-site surveillance audit</i>	On-site surveillance audit & re-certification	2	1 or 2
	On-site surveillance audit	<i>Off-site surveillance audit</i>	<i>Off-site surveillance audit</i>	On-site surveillance audit & re-certification	2	1 or 2
	<i>Off-site surveillance audit</i>	<i>Off-site surveillance audit</i>	On-site surveillance audit	On-site surveillance audit & re-certification	2	1 or 2
Level 3 (3 on-site, 1 off-site)	<i>Off-site</i>	<i>Off-site</i>	<i>Off-site</i>	On-site surveillance audit & re-certification	2	1 or 2
Level 2 1 Review of information	On-site / <i>Off-site</i>	On-site / <i>Off-site</i>	<i>Review of information</i>	On-site surveillance audit & re-certification	2	1 or 2
	On-site / <i>Off-site</i>	<i>Review of information</i>	On-site / <i>Off-site</i>	On-site surveillance audit & re-certification	2	1 or 2
	Review of information	On-site / <i>Off-site</i>	On-site / <i>Off-site</i>	On-site surveillance audit & re-certification	2	1 or 2

Level 1 Minimum surveillance 2 review of information	On-site / Off-site	<i>Review of information</i>	<i>Review of information</i>	On-site surveillance audit & re- certification	2	1 or 2
	<i>Review of information</i>	<i>Review of information</i>	On-site / Off-site	On-site surveillance audit & re- certification	2	1 or 2
	<i>Review of information</i>	On-site / Off-site	<i>Review of information</i>	On-site surveillance audit & re- certification	2	1 or 2

G7.28.4 and 7.28.6 Verification of information ▲

To assess fisheries against the verification of information criteria, the CAB should create a list of information, information resources and aspects of the fishery that need to be reviewed in the annual audit. For each item the CAB should use Table G10 below to determine the likelihood that they will be able to access the required information remotely and that they can confirm veracity of the information.

In determining how fisheries meet the criteria on verification of information, the CAB may consider the type, nature and complexity of the fishery. Different fisheries will be at different points on the spectrum from a very limited capacity to verify information remotely to a highly advanced ability to verify information remotely. The CAB should use their expert judgement and knowledge of the fishery to determine a surveillance level that is commensurate with the fishery's ability to provide the information remotely.

Table G10: Assessment of information available to enable the determination of appropriate surveillance

	Ability to verify remotely is low (low)	Ability to verify remotely is high (higher)	CAB evaluation (high)
Client and stakeholder input	Electronic forms of communication and other mechanisms to engage with clients and stakeholders (such as video conferencing, phone conferencing, email, phone) are absent, limited or inefficient and ineffective in providing the information required for an audit in the particular circumstances of the fishery.	There are ample opportunities and mechanisms to engage with clients and stakeholders including electronic forms of communication, such as videoconferencing phone conferencing, email and phone. The mechanisms are effective in the particular circumstances of the fishery.	
Fishery reports, government documents, stock assessment reports and/or other relevant reports	Fishery reports and other types of reports required for the surveillance, and to demonstrate fishery performance in relation to any relevant conditions and on-going performance against the MSC Fisheries Standard are not available publicly and cannot be transmitted electronically. There is no remote access to the information and there are none, or very limited other sources available to triangulate and confirm status of the fishery	Fishery reports and other documented evidence that can be used to demonstrate progress against conditions and other issues relevant to the MSC Fisheries Standard can be easily and transparently checked remotely, due to such information being available publicly, such as being available on a website or having been widely distributed and made publicly available to several stakeholders. The reports can	

	with respect to the MSC Standard	be transmitted electronically, and veracity easily confirmed.	
Information appropriate to determination of Principle 1 and Principle 2 information requirements (see Guidance to the MSC Fisheries Standard)	Information from electronic monitoring of position, observer data, logbooks, fisher interviews, dockside monitoring etc. is required for audits but cannot be easily transmitted to a remote auditor in a form that can be easily interpreted.	Where information from electronic monitoring of position, observer data, logbooks, fisher interviews, dockside monitoring etc. is required to verify performance against the MSC Fisheries Standard, this information is available to be transmitted electronically to auditors in a form that can be easily interpreted.	
Transparency of the management system	Level of transparency of information by management is low such that information about performance of the fishery is generally not easily nor widely available.	There is a high level of transparency in management, such that information on the fishery is widely and publicly available or known to the wider group of stakeholders. Any information provided on the fishery can be easily verified.	
Vessels, gear or other physical aspect of the fishery	There are milestones and conditions that require inspection of vessels or other physical aspects of the fishery during the audit and there are no reliable mechanisms for verifying these aspects of the fishery from a remote location.	There are no milestones that require investigation of physical aspects of the fishery or if there are, there are reliable mechanisms to enable verification of developments with respect to that milestone from a remote location.	

Example of how to determine surveillance levels

In this example, a fishery has conditions on the following PIs: 1.1.1, 1.2.4, 2.2.2, 2.2.3 and 3.2.3.

Condition	Action plan & milestones	Client commitment and CAB evaluation
1.2.1 By the fourth annual surveillance audit, the client shall provide information to demonstrate that there is a robust and precautionary harvest strategy in place and evidence exists that it is achieving its objectives for all significant fisheries that target this stock.	1. At each annual surveillance audit provide updates on progress by the fishery management agency towards developing a robust and precautionary harvest strategy for the stock. 2. By the 4th annual surveillance audit, the client will provide evidence of the robust and precautionary harvest strategy in place for the fishery.	1. The CAB shall be provided with meeting minutes and research papers to assess the developments. 2. Adoption of harvest strategy could be checked by documents (agreements, research plans, fishery management plans), letters from stakeholders, as well as impact assessment of harvest strategy.
1.2.3 Develop and implement a sampling program of full catch recording across a suitable sample of the fleet.	Year 1 1. Request scientific institute to help set up self-sampling program consistent with condition requirement. 2. The skippers and crew of vessels will be trained in how to perform self-sampling.	Year 1 1. Present the CAB with report by scientific institute as well as the self-sampling program protocol and results. 2. Provide evidence that crew has been trained – record of training material, attendance list to training. Also (raw)

	3. Results of self-sampling protocol will be presented annually in a report.	records of self-sampling (from a sample of vessels). 3. Analysis of results documents sent to CAB
2.2.2 Develop a strategy to reduce impacts of fishery secondary species and provide evidence to the CAB that the strategy has been implemented successfully.	Year 3 Develop a management plan for secondary species that outlines management strategies and measures for secondary species that ensure that the fishery does not hinder recovery of the species.	Year 3 The CAB shall be provided with the full management plan in Year 3.
2.2.3 Establish a scientifically defensible monitoring and reporting system for secondary species.	Year 1 to Year 3 The processing company affiliated with the fishery will keep records of any bycatch that arrives at the dock. Records will detail species, species count, tonnage and date delivered. The national fisheries department will receive a copy of this report weekly. Vessel logs will also contain any bycatch therefore monitoring bycatch not only at delivery but on the fishing ground. Year 3 The monitoring protocol will be adopted in the fisheries management plan.	Year 1 to Year 3 At every surveillance audit until year 3 the CAB shall be provided with secondary species monitoring data from processing company and vessel logs. Year 3 The updated fisheries management plan will be sent to the CAB.
3.2.3 A MCS system has been implemented, however, sanctions for non-compliance exist, but they are not necessarily consistently applied. This view is supported by the lack of regular data collection on infringements by vessels.	Year 1 The coastguard will review MCS procedures, provide a plan to ensure effective enforcement and identify required resources; records will also be collated on infringements and sanctions prior to the first audit. Year 2 The updated MCS procedures will be implemented in the second year. Records on infringements and sanctions will be maintained and analysed to determine the effectiveness of the plan. Years 3 and 4 Records on infringements and sanctions will continue to be maintained and analysed in subsequent years to monitor and refine the MCS plan.	Year 1 The CAB shall be provided with minutes of meeting between the client and the coast guard as well as a detailed plan of how MCS procedures will be tightened and an overview of increased monitoring of infringements. Year 2 Evidence of roll-out of updated MCS procedures is provided to the CAB. The CAB will also be presented with effectiveness analysis. Year 3 and 4 The CAB will also be presented with effectiveness analysis.

The above assessment demonstrates that all required information can be provided remotely. Consequently, the CAB would present a detailed justification for each surveillance activity and the number of auditors that will carry out the surveillance as outlined in the following table:

Year	Surveillance activity	Number of auditors	Justification
1	Off-site audit	2	Information needed to verify progress towards conditions 1.2.1, 1.2.3, 2.2.3 and 3.2.3 can be provided remotely in year 1.
2	Off-site audit	2	Information needed to verify progress towards conditions 1.2.1, 2.2.3 and 3.2.3 can be provided remotely in year 2.
3	On-site audit	1 on-site with remote support	Information needed to verify progress towards conditions 1.2.1, 2.2.3 and 3.2.3 can be provided remotely in year 3. Considering that milestones indicate that most conditions will be closed out in year 3, the CAB proposes to have an on-site audit with 1 auditor on-site with remote support – this to ensure that all information is collected and because the information can be provided remotely.
4	On-site audit	2	Information needed to verify progress towards conditions 1.2.1 and 3.2.3 can be provided remotely in year 4. It is assumed that this site visit will be combined with the site visit for the reassessment so that the team for reassessment can carry out the surveillance at the same time.

G7.28.8.1 Surveillance schedule ▲

The 6-month flexibility either side of the anniversary date allows surveillance audits to align with key dates in the fishery management cycle and the expected delivery of conditions according to the Client Action Plan. It also allows the coordination of site visits with the surveillance audits of other nearby MSC fisheries, thereby minimising the inputs required from management agencies and stakeholders. This flexibility means that some or all surveillance audits will not be held on the anniversary date of the certificate.

If the next surveillance is proposed to be held later than the certificate anniversary, the CAB should inform stakeholders before the anniversary date so that they are aware of the revised timing.

Regardless of revised surveillance audit timings, 4 surveillance audits are to be conducted before the expiry date of the existing certificate, see 7.28.9.

G7.28.16.1.b 'Behind target' ▲

'Behind target' means actions, outcomes, expected results or milestones have fallen behind the timeframes specified when setting the condition.

G7.28.16.1.b.i Remedial action ▲

Remedial action can include the CAB setting new milestones so long as they are still expected to achieve the condition within the timeframes identified at the time of setting the condition.

G7.28.16.2 Back 'on target' ▲

Back "on target" means meeting the original milestones or revised milestones (described in G7.28.16.1.b.i) within 12 months of falling behind.

G7.28.16.2.c and G7.28.16.4.c Full assessment after suspension related to conditions ▲

The MSC's intent is that if a fishery has failed to achieve a condition by its deadline the fishery client is not allowed to enter the same Unit(s) of Certification, or entities in the UoC(s), into (re)assessment under either the same or an alternative name or alias where the effective intent is to extend the duration of the condition into a new certification period.

G7.28.23 Completing the audit ▲

In line with ISO 17065 and ISO 19011 requirements, CABs are required to have an audit plan established with clear timeframes, justifying when evidence-gathering will take place in an audit process. During both on-site and off-site audits, the end of the evidence-gathering stage should be used as the start day for surveillance report submission timelines.

G7.29 Expedited audits

G7.29.1 New information ▲

Examples of 'significant new information' are:

- Major changes in management.
- New information describing a major impact of the fishery.

However, as the FCP, states there must be good reason to think that these are actual material differences, and not a likely temporary change in indicated status that might arise, for instance, from the introduction of a new, not yet validated, stock assessment model.

G7.29.10 Expedited audits during full and initial assessment or scope extension ▲

The MSC's intent for expedited audits during full assessments is as follows:

- Expedited audits are triggered at any point after the information cut-off date and conducted alongside the assessment process.
- The determination and certificate decision are based on the information that was available up until the information cut-off date (7.17.1.1).
- If the draft determination is to certify a fishery but the expedited audit results in the rescoring of an individual PI to less than 60 or a Principle score less than 80, the determination and certificate decision is not affected (i.e. the certificate is issued). However, the result of the expedited audit means that the certificate is immediately suspended. The expedited audit report and the MSC Notice of Suspension Template are published at the same time as the Public Certification Report.
- The suspension is immediate and there is no 30-day notice period.

G7.29.12 Expedited audit during a reassessment ▲

If the reassessment is against a new version of the MSC Fisheries Standard, it is possible that an expedited audit is triggered for the existing certificate and not the reassessment, or vice versa, due to difference in Performance Indicator Scoring Guideposts.

When an expedited audit is triggered as per 7.29.1 for both the existing certificate and the reassessment, the MSC does not expect the CAB to conduct two separate expedited audits. Therefore, the CAB may conduct the expedited audit activities so that all relevant information and Performance Indicator Scoring Guideposts are considered at the same time. A single expedited audit report may be published. However, where there are differences in the PISGs (due to a new version of the Fisheries Standard being used for the reassessment) the CAB will need to record the results separately and clearly identify the results that are relevant to the existing certificate and the reassessment.

When an expedited audit is triggered for both the existing certificate and the reassessment, the expedited audit report is published within 60 days of announcing the expedited audit regardless of when the Public Certification Report is published. This allows the supply chain to prepare for the suspension of the fishery once the reassessment is finished.

G7.30.5.1 Open conditions at reassessment ▲

There are a number of scenarios under which a fishery could enter reassessment with an open condition(s):

- The condition is being carried over into the next certificate (see G7.30.5.1.a)
- The condition deadline is the 4th year surveillance audit and the 4th surveillance audit has not been conducted at the time of announcing the reassessment and publishing the Announcement Comment Draft Report.
- The condition deadline is in the 5th year.

G7.30.5.1.a Carrying over conditions ▲

Conditions can be carried over in the following scenarios:

- Exceptional circumstances apply as per 7.18.1.6.
- The condition was set during a surveillance audit during the most recent certificate cycle.
- The condition was set during a scope extension during the most recent certificate cycle.
- The condition was set during an expedited audit during the most recent certificate cycle.
- The condition was set on PI 1.2.1 scoring issue (a) and the stock is at or above B_{MSY} and 'available' harvest control rules (HCRs) are in place (MSC Fisheries Standard and Guidance v2.01 [SA2.5.2–5](#) and [GSA2.5.2](#)).

G7.30.6 Related conditions ▲

A related condition is a condition that was closed during the previous certification period but where a new condition on the same Performance Indicator or Scoring Issue is set at the subsequent assessment or audit, or a new condition involves the same scoring element or topic (e.g. collecting information on P2 species).

The scenarios under which a related condition is opened could include:

- A change in the assessment tree which has led to an increase in the performance required at the SG80 level (i.e. the sustainability bar has been raised).
- There has been a change in status since the condition was closed – this would only be applicable for outcomes PIs.
- The scoring element now falls under a different component, e.g. in the previous assessment a species was designated as a secondary species but now is designated as an ETP species.

G7.30.13 Reduced reassessment ▲

Remote team members can provide support to the on-site team member, but it is up to the CAB to determine how the team can best make use of on-site and remote team member(s) during the reduced reassessment.

The reduced reassessment may benefit from remote team member(s) participating in stakeholder consultations conducted at the site visit by the on-site team member. This should be considered and arranged as part of the planning process. There may be some stakeholder consultation meetings where it is not necessary for the remote team member(s) to participate remotely and their time could be used more effectively for other reduced reassessment activities.

The team member selected to conduct the site visit (i.e. the on-site team member) should be the person most relevant to the content of the stakeholder interviews and information gathering that is needed to assess the fishery. For example, if the fishery had conditions on Principle 2 components, then the Principle 2 expert should be the on-site team member. The Team Leader will provide oversight of the reduced reassessment process.

End of FCP Guidance

Annex GPB Harmonised fisheries – Guidance

GPB1.1 Scope ▲

Background

The MSC expects the outcome of any given fishery assessment, particularly the overall result that is achieved and the setting of conditions, to be consistent between overlapping fisheries. The [MSC-MSCI Vocabulary](#) defines overlapping fisheries as “2 or more fisheries which require assessment of some, or all, of the same aspects of MSC Principles 1, 2 and/or 3 within their respective units of certification”. This definition is also relevant for the Unit of Assessment (UoA). Harmonisation is not necessary in assessments of fisheries that use similar gears or management approaches but operate in clearly different geographic areas.

Harmonisation of Principles

Harmonisation is necessary when overlapping fisheries score the same stock(s) under Principle 1. This is because Principle 1 considers the full impacts of all fishing on the stock(s). Harmonisation may also be required in Principle 2 and in Principle 3. Table GPB1 outlines the harmonisation requirements for overlapping fisheries by PI.

Table GPB1: Harmonisation requirements per PI. No harmonisation is required for P2 PIs and scoring issues (SIs) that are not listed in the table.

PI/SIs	Required to harmonise	
All P1 PIs	Yes	P1 always considers the impacts of all fisheries on a stock. Any fisheries that have the same P1 species (stocks) should be harmonised.
PI 2.1.1a	Partially	For stocks that are ‘main’ in both UoAs, harmonise status relative to PRI (at SG60,80 and 100), and if below PRI, harmonise cumulative impacts at SG80 (not at SG60).
PI 2.2.1a	Partially	For stocks that are ‘main’ in both UoAs, harmonise status relative to Biologically Based Limits (at SG60, 80, and 100), and if below Biologically Based Limits, harmonise cumulative impacts at SG80 (not at SG60).
PI 2.3.1a	Partially	Harmonise recognition of any limits applicable to both UoAs (at SG60, 80 and 100), and cumulative effects of the UoAs at SG80 and SG100 (not at SG60).
PI 2.4.1b	Partially	Harmonise recognition of VMEs where both UoAs operate in the same ‘managed area(s)’ (see Guidance to the MSC Fisheries Standard).
PI 2.4.2 a, c	Partially	Harmonise scoring at SG100 since all fishery impacts are considered (not at SG60 or 80).
All P2 PIs	Situation dependent	If 2 UoAs are identical in scope, even if the UoCs are different (e.g. separate clients), harmonisation is required.
PIs 3.1.1 – 3.1.3	Situation dependent	Both UoAs are part of the same larger fishery or fleet or have stocks in either P1 or P2 that are at least partially managed by the same jurisdiction(s) (nation states, RFMOs, or others) or under the same agreements. Harmonisation may sometimes be possible for those management arrangements that apply to both UoAs (noting the limitations accepted in GPB1.3).

		The MSC accepts that it may be impractical to attempt full harmonisation, due to the large number of fisheries that may be managed under the relevant policy framework, and the differences in application between them.
PIs 3.2.1 – 3.2.4	Situation dependent	Both UoAs have stocks within either P1 or P2 that are at least partially managed by the same jurisdiction(s) (nation states, RFMOs, or others) or under the same agreements. Harmonisation is needed for those management arrangements that apply to both UoAs, e.g. at the RFMO level but not the national level in the case of 2 separate national fleets both fishing the same regional stock.

GPB1.2 Assessment tree ▲

CABs do not have to harmonise fishery assessments that use different versions of the assessment tree ([MSC Fisheries Standard Annex SA](#), [Annex SB](#), [Annex SC](#) and [Annex SD](#)).

GPB1.3 Harmonised fishery assessments for overlapping fisheries ▲

The purpose of this guidance is to assist teams in the harmonisation of assessment outcomes and conditions in overlapping fisheries. The general principle in Annex PB is that any new assessment or audit within a harmonised group of overlapping fisheries should take into consideration the conclusions of any previous assessment or audit such that harmonisation is maintained over time.

Consistency

Consistent outcomes should be interpreted as:

- The same level of performance (i.e. the overall result of the relevant PI scoring is either a pass or a fail for overlapping fisheries).
- Conditions on the same PIs, relating to the same scoring issues and scoring elements, as appropriate.
- Equivalent evaluations, meaning that largely similar arguments and logic are included in the scoring rationales.

Teams are not required to draft a single harmonised rationale for each relevant PI; scoring rationales may be drafted independently by each team. When a team fully agrees with the conclusions of a previous team, they can adopt the same content and rationales. In some cases, they may also wish to emphasise key points that they believe are particularly important. The rationales presented should, however, lead logically to the harmonised scores that are agreed between the teams (i.e. which scoring issue is met at each SG level and for each scoring element).

Having consistent outcomes does not mean the scores need to be exactly the same between different teams, so long as any conditions are generated by the same scoring issues and scoring elements within harmonised PIs, and the same outcome (pass/fail) is achieved (e.g. for identical fisheries, the 1 fishery should not have a condition in PI 2.1.1 on sharks while the other has a condition on bluefin tuna). Given this constraint, and the rules applied in scoring (Section 7.17), it should be rare to find a situation where the scores are not exactly the same (an example would be where P2 species are only partly overlapping such that some species are harmonised, while others are not; such that the overall scores for the PIs may then differ).

There may be occasions when different conditions are justified, but they will be rare, and based only on 3 things:

10. Differences in requirement from different versions of the default trees.
11. Changes to management or status that have occurred since the original assessment.

12. Differences in actual performance of the fisheries.

Under PB1.3.3.4, here is nothing precluding the harmonisation discussion from being mediated. It is expected that at the end of the harmonisation discussion teams will have consistent outcomes.

In cases where there are 2 UoCs from the same UoA, harmonisation should be expected to result in identical scores and conditions unless there is a very clear explanation of the different practices adopted by the 2 UoCs that justifies their different scores.

The MSC's intent here is that a part of a UoA that simply decides for commercial or other reasons to have a separate certificate should not be allowed to have different scoring from other members of the same fleet. The MSC is specific in wanting to avoid a situation, particularly in Principle 2, in which a fishery in receipt of conditions is able to split itself into several small fisheries and avoid conditions or avoid the requirements to deal with cumulative Principle 2 issues, simply because the impacts of the UoAs are much smaller.

Exceptional circumstances

An example of an exceptional circumstance in the context of harmonisation relates to P1 when there are 2 countries that share a stock but their methods of monitoring UoA removals are different, causing a demonstrable difference in the fisheries with regards to the scoring and rationales for PI 1.2.3 (b).

Timing of harmonisation activities

Harmonisation should be considered whenever a team is involved in scoring or rescoreing a fishery, or setting or reviewing progress against conditions including at 1 or more of the following stages:

- When preparing the Announcement Comment Draft Report and during initial stakeholder input before the full assessment site visit.
- Following the stakeholder consultation on the Public Comment Draft Report (i.e. to allow for any changes made in response to comments made on the draft report).
- At the time of surveillances when the CAB is proposing to close out a condition or revise the scoring of a fishery based on change in status or management.
- When an expedited audit is triggered that may result in a 'material difference'.
- Any other time that issues arise that could result in scoring changes.

Harmonisation discussions are not necessary when the team agrees with the outcome in previously scored overlapping fisheries (PB1.3.4.3). When new or different scoring is proposed in the later fishery assessment during any of the stages listed above, teams should hold harmonisation discussions. This may be easiest at the time of surveillances audits; therefore, surveillance timing and condition timelines should be considered. Teams should also be prepared to adjust full assessment timing where appropriate (e.g. if this only implies a short delay) to allow harmonisation with other teams at convenient times.

Example

Where a fishery has not yet held its first scoring discussions at the time that a second fishery assessment is announced, it is expected that the first fishery would wait for the second fishery to have its site visit and to have a harmonisation discussion when both teams have had the chance to review the issues.

The scoring of a fishery occurs at or after the site visit but is also subject to revision following client and peer review. If the first fishery has not yet published its Public Comment Draft Report, harmonisation discussions should consider the provisional scoring of the 2 teams. If a Public Comment Draft Report is available at the time of a harmonisation discussion, this should be considered by the second team as the baseline for its scoring (i.e. as the starting point for the discussions as in PB1.3.3). If a third or subsequent overlapping fishery enters assessment while

discussions are ongoing between 2 original fisheries, they should follow the requirements in PB1.3.3 or PB1.3.4 as appropriate.

Even with the above coordination, there may still be some cases where it is not possible for all teams to be available and ready to contribute to harmonisation discussions at the same time, such as when a new overlapping fishery has just started assessment but has not yet had its site visit.

In such cases, harmonisation may be postponed until the next available time when the teams can hold a discussion (e.g. after the site visit in the example above). Where no discussion can be held within a reasonable time, a team may then score independently, but it should include a statement of its intent to harmonise with other overlapping fisheries at the first available opportunity (e.g. at their first coordinated surveillance audit).

The team should not award any score that is 'materially different', as defined in 7.20.5.c, to that awarded by preceding team(s) until harmonisation is achieved in line with PB1.3.3 and PB1.3.4.

Harmonisation of condition timelines

When considering harmonisation of conditions and condition time frames, teams should consider the difference between 2 clients' certification time frame and whether the conditions can be met in the same time frame. Harmonisation is required in scoring and condition setting in overlapping fisheries but is not required for the Client Action Plans. Timelines assigned to meet conditions should be precautionary such that the earliest date for closing a particular condition in 1 (or more) of the overlapping fisheries should apply to all overlapping fisheries.

The team should provide a justification and justification in cases where condition time frames are not harmonised.

Harmonisation of scores and conditions when evaluating cumulative impacts of MSC UoAs in PI 2.1.1, PI 2.2.1 and PI 2.4.2

In 2014, the MSC introduced a number of requirements for assessing the cumulative impacts of certified fisheries.

When 2 or more UoAs enter assessment at the same time, the regular rules of harmonisation apply and outcomes and conditions need to be accounted for in terms of cumulative impacts and elsewhere.

When an under-assessment UoA overlaps with a certified fishery, the team should consider the cumulative impact of all MSC UoAs during the assessment process of that UoA, if the UoA and the certified fisheries all meet the trigger requirement for cumulative impacts (e.g. they all classify primary species A as "main").

Certified fisheries do not need to consider the cumulative impact of any newly certified UoA until the first surveillance audit following the certification of the additional UoA.

When taking into account the cumulative impacts of several MSC UoAs, it could be the case that a currently certified fishery would have its Principle 2 scores changed if a newly certified fishery increases the cumulative impact on a depleted stock.

Cumulative impacts for vulnerable marine ecosystem (VME) habitats are dealt with under management requirements and the MSC expects that cumulative precautionary avoidance of impact should be implemented rapidly. For instance, it could be the case that a newly certified fishery has designated and closed new VMEs. These VMEs should also be considered by the already certified fishery at its next surveillance audit.

The terms of an existing condition for currently certified fisheries might also change with the arrival of newly certified fisheries triggering the cumulative impact requirements, particularly for VMEs. This would likely be the case when the cumulative impact has increased and when differing partial strategies have not aligned. In such cases, the harmonisation of milestones to achieve a demonstrably effective strategy at SG80 (for PI 2.1.1) or to provide evidence that VMEs are being protected by all MSC UoAs at SG80 (for PI 2.4.2) might then also be altered.

In this case, teams should allow increased flexibility in terms of setting the milestones of the harmonised condition, thereby ensuring that already certified fisheries working on achieving their milestones would not fail to meet them during the certificate lifetime due to the arrival of the newly certified fisheries and the higher impact.

Costs

When undergoing harmonisation efforts, clients should collaborate where possible (e.g. via certificate sharing) and thereby minimise the number of overlapping assessments that require harmonisation. The MSC accepts that this is sometimes not possible, and that the uncertainties associated with harmonisation can sometimes be difficult for CABs and clients to plan for and manage.

To minimise costs and delays, the MSC requires that teams plan for harmonisation activities well in advance, and not later than the site visit stage and their own first scoring, see PB1.3.2. Teams are also encouraged to hold harmonisation meetings virtually (e.g. by video-conference).

End of Annex GPB Guidance

Annex GPC Fishery team leader, team member, team and peer reviewer qualifications and competencies – guidance

GPC1.2-4 Fishery team qualifications

The qualification requirements for fishery team leaders, members and the team overall (Tables PC1, PC2 and PC3) each require at least 3 years' experience in different aspects of fisheries science and management. The CAB may include relevant research experience in this total (including that gained during higher-level research degrees (e.g. a PhD or a Masters by thesis), but should not include lower-level research (e.g. during a Masters by coursework with a short summer project) or undergraduate training. Experience working on MSC assessments (e.g. as part of a team on a previous fishery assessment) may also be counted towards the 3-year requirement. CABs should note the additional ISO19011 training requirements for team leaders in GCR 6.1.3.b-c .

GPC1.2 Table PC1 Team leader qualifications ▲

2.a Review of updates to MSC Fisheries Program Documents ▲

This may take the form of a search of the MSC website for new updates issued during the preceding year.

2.b Pass the fishery team leader course ▲

The fishery team leader training course consists of a set of compulsory online training modules, which are listed on the [MSC Online Training Platform](#).

GPC1.3 Table PC2 Team member qualifications ▲

2.a Review of updates to MSC Fisheries Program Documents ▲

This may take the form of a search of the MSC website for new updates issued during the preceding year.

2.b Pass the fishery team leader course ▲

The fishery team member training course consists of a set of compulsory online training modules, which are listed on the [MSC Online Training Platform](#).

GPC1.4 Table PC3 team qualifications ▲

1 Fish stock assessment ▲

Where 3 years' or more experience is stated, the '3 years' refers to an individual team member needing to have 3 years' experience. The experience cannot be the accumulated experience of different team members (e.g. 1+2 years).

2 Fish stock biology/ecology ▲

For a team member to comply with this requirement, 'similar biology' in this context means that where the target species is:

- A demersal fish species, experience with other demersal fish species qualifies.

- A pelagic fish species, experience with other pelagic fish species qualifies.
- A crustacean species, experience with other crustacean species qualifies.
- A mollusc species, experience with other mollusc species qualifies.
- Similarly, for any other taxon.

5 Current knowledge of the country, language and local fishery context ▲

“Common language” means knowledge of a language that is spoken by clients and stakeholders. The intent of the requirement is to ensure that information can be clearly exchanged between the team, client and stakeholders and understood by most parties. For example, the common language in Indonesia could be Bahasa, and in African countries it could be English, French or Portuguese.

A “relevant fishery” in this context means where the scale of the fishery, the stock assessment techniques and management approaches are similar to those in the fishery under assessment. For example, if the fishery under assessment is a small-scale operation with limited quantitative information and informal management systems, then relevant fisheries would have these characteristics as well. Similarly, if the fishery under assessment is large scale or industrial with fully quantitative stock assessment approaches and related management systems (such as harvest control rules related to input/output measures) then relevant fisheries would also have these characteristics.

6.c Review traceability requirements ▲

The review of any updates to the traceability requirements may take the form of a search of the MSC website for new updates issued during the preceding year.

7.c Review RBF requirements ▲

The review of any updates to the RBF requirements may take the form of a search of the MSC website for new updates issued during the preceding year.

End of Annex GPC Guidance

Annex GPD Heading not used at this time

Annex GPE Scope extensions ▲

Background

Annex PE outlines the minimum assessment requirements necessary for a scope extension from an already certified fishery to another fishery. There may be instances where additional assessment steps or evaluations are necessary to ensure that the entire assessment of the fishery across all 3 Principles continues to be accurate when additional stocks are added to Principle 1.

The requirements given for the scope extension in Annex PE are the minimum requirements. If the CAB determines in their review of the fishery that additional assessment steps or PI rescoring are necessary, such steps should be undertaken in addition to those outlined in Annex PE.

GPE1.2 Assessment process

GPE1.2.2.1.a Gap analysis ▲

The CAB may use Table G8 to describe the outcome of the gap analysis.

GPE1.2.4.3 Considerations for rescoring of Principle 2 species ▲

In cases where there are a number of stocks identified as main primary in a certified fishery, assessing 1 or more of these against Principle 1 instead will mean that they are removed as scoring elements from Principle 2 primary species.

The remaining scoring elements in Principle 2 primary species should then be rescored according to 7.17.10.d. This does not require a Principle 2 expert.

In the unlikely event that the new Principle 2 score causes a failure of the fishery due to the reallocation of Principle 2 species to Principle 1, the CAB may elect to discontinue the scope extension process for 1 or more stocks.

End of Annex GPE Guidance

Annex GPF Risk-Based Framework – guidance

GPF1 Introduction to the Risk-Based Framework (RBF)



The FAO Guidelines on Ecolabelling for Fisheries and Fisheries Products from Marine Capture Fisheries provided the conceptual basis for the adoption of a risk-based approach to the evaluation of fisheries against certain PIs in circumstances where information is inadequate to evaluate those PIs conventionally.

In paragraph 32, the FAO guidelines state:

“...the use of less elaborate methods for assessment of stocks should not preclude fisheries from possible certification for ecolabelling”. It goes on to note “...to the extent that the application of such methods results in greater uncertainty about the state of the ‘stock under consideration’, more precautionary approaches to managing such resources will be required which may necessitate lower levels of utilisation of the resource”.

The inference is that in the absence of detailed scientific information on fishery impacts and providing the existence of tools that provide a qualitative or semi-quantitative indication of the risk inherent in a fishery, it should be possible to assess such a fishery for certification based on the extent to which fishing activity is demonstrably “precautionary” or of “less risk”.

The MSC adopted an approach that considers a combination of risk-based indicators to arrive at a risk score that translates to a parallel MSC score. The risk-based indicators used in this process include qualitative and semi-quantitative proxies that assess the impact of fishing activity or correspond with the level of utilisation of the resource. In addition, the approach requires the team to adopt the worst-case scenario approach to scoring the risk indicators in the absence of credible evidence, information or logical reasoning to the contrary.

In the event of the RBF being used for a PI, the likelihood of being scored high risk and of receiving a low MSC scores on the specified indicator increases with increasing scale and intensity of utilisation of resources in the fishery. While the RBF allows the use of more qualitative information obtained under an extensive stakeholder consultation process, increased uncertainty around the information or evidence used, or the lack of consensus on information obtained in the process will result in the most cautious (worst plausible) score being applied, furthering the likelihood of lower MSC scores.

The MSC’s intention in allowing the use of a risk-based approach is to ensure that its assessment process is accessible to data-deficient fisheries that are readily demonstrated as operating in a precautionary manner.

Implicit in the approach is a recognition that fisheries operating at relatively high levels of utilisation pose a greater risk to the ecological components with which they interact and that the assessment and management of such risks must be underpinned by comprehensive scientific information.

The MSC is aware of the existence of other risk-based analysis tools, as well as the fact that the development of these tools is a continuous process. The MSC has not calibrated any alternative risk-based approaches against the default assessment tree but would encourage interested parties to consider calibration of such equivalent risk-based approaches against the SGs in the default assessment tree. Future versions of the MSC RBF will reflect the continuing evolution and refinement of these tools and methods.

The precaution built into the RBF methods creates an incentive to use the conventional process when data is available. Precautionary levels can be defined as the probability that the resulting RBF score is greater than the score obtained if using the default assessment tree (DAT). RBF parameters have been calibrated so that when scoring data-deficient scoring elements it is expected that:

- For PI 1.1.1, the probability that the RBF score is greater than the DAT is <0.01.
- For PI 2.1.1, the probability that the RBF score is greater than the DAT is <0.05.
- For PI 2.2.1, the probability that the RBF score is greater than the DAT is <0.2, or resulting scores are on average less than 10 scoring points above PI 2.1.1.

- For PI 2.3.1, the probability that the RBF score is greater than the DAT is <0.05.
- For PI 2.4.1, the probability that the RBF score is greater than the DAT is <0.5.
- For PI 2.5.1, the precautionary level of the RBF has not been calculated.

GPF1.1 Applying the RBF in scoring different PIs ▲

Background

The RBF is designed for use in association with the default tree for Principles 1 and 2. The RBF was adopted by the MSC to enable scoring of fisheries in data-deficient situations, particularly for the outcome PIs associated with Principles 1 and 2.

The RBF may be applied to the whole PI if all scoring elements are determined to be data-deficient. However, there may be occasions where quantitative information is available for some scoring elements within outcome PIs (i.e. species under PI 2.1.1) and not others. In such cases, the decision on the use of the RBF should be taken at a scoring element level.

For Principle 1 PIs, there is typically only 1 scoring element being considered (target species of the fishery), but under Principle 2, the full range of primary and secondary species, habitats, or ecosystems could be assessed.

There can be cases where there are both data-deficient and non-data-deficient scoring elements (e.g. different primary species).

Scoring elements not scored using the RBF should be scored using the default tree, taking account of any accompanying guidance specific to that PI.

GPF1.1.1 RBF methodologies ▲

The RBF includes a set of methods for assessing the risk to each of the ecological components from activities associated with the fishery in assessment. The methods range in complexity and data requirements from a system based on expert judgment, to a semi-quantitative analysis to assess potential risk. Each of the methods provides a risk-based estimate of the impact of the fishery on a data-deficient scoring element being scored within outcome PI. These risk estimates are in turn related to the specific Scoring Guideposts used to assess the performance of the fishery against the PI for a component.

To achieve a good result, it is necessary to plan the stakeholder consultation strategy for each of the methodologies in such a way as to ensure effective participation from a range of stakeholders.

The robustness of these methodologies relies heavily on the inputs of a suitably broad stakeholder group with a good balance of knowledge about the fishery and the ecological components on which it has impacts. Table GPF1 below provides a description of the 4 methodologies within the RBF.

Table GPF1: Description of methodologies within the RBF

Methodology	Description
Consequence Analysis (CA)	The CA is a semi-quantitative analysis that assesses the consequence of fishing activity on a particular species subcomponent. The CA is partly based on the structured collection of qualitative information from a diverse group of stakeholders, as well as using information on proxies that can be used to estimate changes to the relevant subcomponent in a fishery.
Productivity Susceptibility Analysis (PSA)	The PSA requires information about the productivity and susceptibility of each species in a given PI, and uses this information to individually score a set of attributes using pre-established PSA tables. Any attribute for which there is insufficient data is automatically assigned the highest risk score: at least some of information is thus needed to demonstrate low risk in the fishery.

Methodology	Description
Consequence Spatial Analysis (CSA)	The CSA requires information about the consequence of fishing activities and spatial distribution of habitat types and uses this information to individually score a set of attributes using pre-established CSA tables. Any attribute for which there is insufficient data is automatically assigned the highest risk score: at least some level of information is needed to demonstrate low risk in the fishery.
Scale Intensity Consequence Analysis (SICA)	The SICA is a qualitative analysis that aims to identify which activities lead to a significant impact on any ecosystem. A SICA is partly based on the structured collection of qualitative information pertaining to the PI in question from a diverse group of stakeholders.

GPF1.1.2 PIs scored using the RBF ▲

Table GPF2 defines which PIs within the default tree may be scored using RBF methodologies. PIs for which the RBF may directly be used are indicated below. PIs for which special guidance applies when the RBF is used are indicated below.

Table GPF2: RBF methodologies available for scoring PIs and implications for non-RBF PIs

PI		RBF applicability
1.1.1	Stock status	Both CA and PSA applicable.
1.1.2	Stock rebuilding	The RBF is designed for use in cases where direct measures of stock status, such as estimates of biomass, are not available. There is no direct measure to determine whether the stock is actually depleted and would need to consider rebuilding measures under PI 1.1.2. What is known after scoring PI 1.1.1 using the RBF is the risk of the stock being fished such that recruitment would be impaired. Rather than requiring a fishery that scores less than 80 on PI 1.1.1 to use the RBF to score PI 1.1.2, Section PF6 shall apply.
1.2.1	Harvest strategy	RBF not applicable.
1.2.2	Harvest control tools and rules	RBF not applicable.
1.2.3	Information / Monitoring	RBF not applicable.
1.2.4	Assessment of stock status	If RBF is used to score PI 1.1.1, a default score of 80 shall be awarded to this PI. For data-limited fisheries the application of the RBF may be the only “assessment of stock status” available.
2.1.1	Primary species outcome	Only PSA applicable.
2.1.2	Primary species management strategy	RBF not applicable.
2.1.3	Primary species information	RBF not applicable, but there is an RBF specific scoring issue, which has to be scored. This additional scoring issue has been included since

PI		RBF applicability
		the information required to meet default scoring issues would not be expected to be available in data-limited situations applicable to the RBF. If the RBF is used to score PI 2.1.1, it is recognised that the information is not sufficient to estimate outcome status with respect to biologically based limits. For this reason, the alternative scoring issue (a) is scored instead of the default assessment tree scoring issue (a).
2.2.1	Secondary species outcome	Only PSA applicable.
2.2.2	Secondary species management strategy	RBF not applicable.
2.2.3	Secondary species information	RBF not applicable, but there is an RBF specific scoring issue, which has to be scored. This additional scoring issue has been included since the information required to meet default scoring issues would not be expected to be available in data-limited situations applicable to the RBF. If the RBF is used to score PI 2.2.1 it is recognised that the information is not sufficient to estimate outcome status with respect to biologically based limits. For this reason, the alternative scoring issue (a) is scored instead of the default assessment tree scoring issue (a).
2.3.1	ETP species outcome	Only PSA applicable.
2.3.2	ETP species management strategy	RBF not applicable.
2.3.3	ETP species information	RBF not applicable, but there is an RBF specific scoring issue, which has to be scored. This additional scoring issue have been included since the information required to meet default scoring issues would not be expected to be available in data-limited situations applicable to the RBF. If the RBF is used to score PI 2.3.1 it is recognised that the information is not sufficient to estimate outcome status with respect to biologically based limits. For this reason, the alternative scoring issue (a) is scored instead of the default assessment tree scoring issue (a).
2.4.1	Habitats outcome	Only CSA applicable.
2.4.2	Habitats management strategy	RBF not applicable.
2.4.3	Habitats information	RBF not applicable, but there are RBF specific scoring issues, which have to be scored. These additional scoring issues has been included since the information required to meet default scoring issues would not be expected to be available in data-limited situations applicable to the RBF. If the RBF is used to score PI 2.4.1 it is recognised that the information is not sufficient to identify habitats encountered by the fishery or to determine the impact of the fishery on habitats encountered.

PI		RBF applicability
		For this reason, alternative scoring issues, (a) and (b) are scored instead of the default assessment tree scoring issue (a) and (b).
2.5.1	Ecosystem outcome	Only SICA applicable.
2.5.2	Ecosystem management strategy	RBF not applicable.
2.5.3	Ecosystem information	RBF not applicable.
	Principle 3	The RBF is designed to allow the CAB to determine the level of risk that a fishery is posing undue harm to a species, habitat, or ecosystem. The RBF does not apply to Principle 3.

GPF2 Stakeholder involvement in RBF

GPF2.1 Announcing the RBF ▲

The use of the RBF needs to be communicated before the site visit to ensure stakeholders can effectively engage in the RBF process for all scoring elements being assessed.

The use of the RBF should be announced when the fishery assessment is first announced. The CAB may decide to trigger the RBF for a scoring element after the fishery announcement; however, this will require additional communication to stakeholders prior to the site visit. Moreover, if the RBF is triggered during or after the site visit this will require an additional site visit to be scheduled. Therefore, where it is not yet clear whether a scoring element meets criteria in Table 3 in the FCP, the CAB is encouraged to announce the possibility of using the RBF at the fishery announcement stage. In this case, and to improve efficiency of the assessment process, the CAB should announce use of the RBF at fishery announcement, in the Announcement Comment Draft Report, and plan the site visit as if it were an RBF assessment as set out in the FCP. If information is found at the site visit that indicates the RBF is not necessary, the fishery may proceed with a non-RBF assessment for this scoring element.

GPF2.2 Information gathering ▲

Identification of target species, primary species, secondary species, habitats and ecosystems potentially affected by the fishery is part of this process and is often possible through existing data and reports.

Expert judgement and anecdotal evidence is also used to compile these preliminary lists. Stakeholders are then consulted, individually and at fishery management meetings, on the preliminary list with additions and deletions made, and justification recorded for the decisions.

GPF2.2.1.a Management arrangements ▲

For instance, information of management arrangements, such as quotas, limited entry, gear restrictions, spatial closures, depth limits, etc.

GPF2.2.1.f Information about UoA/habitats ▲

The information gathering and preparation stages involve compiling preliminary background information needed to score the UoA. Where there is limited information available about habitat(s)

encountered by the UoA, local knowledge and/or participatory methods may be used to define the habitat(s).

Example

For example, where there is no detailed understanding of a habitat's substratum, geomorphology, and (characteristic) biota (SGB), other sources of local information, such as data collected by local dive operators, may be used to support the determination of habitats. Furthermore, RBF stakeholder workshops can be used to determine, for example, biome classification or depth ranges of habitats using participatory methods to gather stakeholder knowledge.

GPF2.3 Stakeholder consultation

GPF2.3.2 Text to inform stakeholders ▲

The purpose of the recommended text is to encourage a broad range of stakeholders to attend site visits and to provide some advance notice on the nature of the RBF approach.

GPF2.3.3 Planning ▲

The stakeholder engagement process needs to be planned prior to the site visit to ensure effective participation of stakeholders. Background work should be undertaken to ensure that time with stakeholders can focus on new issues that are made known by stakeholders.

GPF2.3.3.1 Stakeholders ▲

Stakeholder consultation with a suitably broad stakeholder group with a good balance of knowledge about the fishery is critical in a risk assessment, particularly at the qualitative (CA/SICA) level of an assessment. Stakeholders provide expert judgement, local knowledge, hands-on experience, fishery-specific and ecological knowledge and raise issues that may not be covered in material provided to the team.

The group should include at least fishers, scientists, conservationists, indigenous representatives, managers, local residents, fish processors and others as necessary.

GPF2.3.3.2 Effective consultation ▲

Early identification of stakeholders is vital to ensuring effective consultation during the assessment process. Identification of stakeholders needs to occur both through contacts made known by the client and via active engagement methods. The choice of which method(s) to use depends on the circumstance of the fishery.

The CAB should consider using at least some of the following methods: newspapers, radio, e-mail, local organisations, etc.

GPF2.3.3.3 Location ▲

The location of the meetings is very important to ensure good participation of stakeholders. Factors that will affect the choice of meeting location could be:

- If stakeholders are spread over a wide area, it might be necessary to hold more than 1 set of meetings to allow for participation.
- The choice of venue needs to be considered depending on the number of stakeholders attending the meetings and the space needed for engagement.
- Meetings can be both formal and informal.

- Engagement can be effective in any location whether inside or outside as long as the team is prepared to run the workshop in that setting.

GPF2.3.3.4 Meetings ▲

Stakeholder meetings can be organised using a number of approaches: workshops, focus groups, separate meetings or a blended approach. The decision on how to structure the meetings depends on a number of considerations:

- The number of PIs that are being assessed using the RBF. It might be better to hold a separate RBF workshop with those who have information relevant to the PIs with other stakeholders attending a different meeting(s).
- Stakeholder dynamics within the group, which will affect who should meet together and who should meet separately.
- There may be conflicting opinions among group members. It might be useful to allow these opinions to be shared to help the team draw conclusions from the stakeholders.

GPF2.3.3.5 Cultural background ▲

Cultural sensitivity needs to be understood when planning meetings with different stakeholders.

GPF2.3.3.6 Language ▲

Where different language levels exist amongst stakeholders, the CAB may consider holding separate meetings with different groups.

GPF2.3.3.7 Background information ▲

The objective of providing materials and background information is to ensure that stakeholders can be brought up to the same level of understanding ahead of the meeting.

GPF2.3.3.8 Participatory methods ▲

See Participatory Methods Toolkit on the MSC website for further guidance.

GPF2.3.5 ▲

In situations where stakeholders do not reach consensus, the team should award the more precautionary score.

GPF3 Conducting a Consequence Analysis (CA)

GPF3.1 Preparation

GPF3.1.1 How to complete a CA template ▲

Each data-deficient species in Principle 1 will need its own CA. This may be done by defining each species as a separate UoA or by scoring the species as separate scoring elements within a combined UoA.

GPF3.1.2.1 ▲

Where no indicator data is available for the target species it cannot be assessed against the MSC Standard.

Table GPF3 shows an example of how to complete a CA template.

Table GPF3: Example of CA score and justification

PRINCIPLE 1: Stock status outcome	Scoring element	Consequence subcomponents	Consequence score
XXX scallop fishery	<i>Placopecten magellanicus</i>	Population size	60
		Reproductive capacity	
		Age/size/sex structure	
		Geographic range	
Justification for most vulnerable subcomponent	Population size was considered the most vulnerable subcomponent based in the impact of exploitation patterns on biomass.		
Justification for consequence score	<p>Information on fleet structure, fishing area and exploitation rates indicate that the stock is exploited at full exploitation rate. However, trends in exploitation rates, biomass and recruitment indicate that fishing is not adversely damaging recruitment in the long term. As the fishery is defined as fully developed and operating at full capacity it cannot be concluded that its impact on population size is minimal or its impact on dynamics is none.</p> <p>Indicators used are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fleet structure: There are 3 scallop fleets operating in the area: the AAA, BBB and CCC fleets. The AAA fleet, of which scallop fishing is the primary activity, has access to the whole area and is subject to quota limits and seasons. The BBB and CCC fleets have access to a portion of the area. • Exploitation rates: Management aims for exploitation rates of 15%, considered as the exploitation rate that will not pose a risk on the productivity of the scallop population. Exploitation rates have been maintained generally at consistent levels with this management target. • Fishing area and seasonality: Detailed distributional information of the AAA fleet's fishing effort is collected on a routine basis. • Overall approach to scoring the AAA stock/biological unit: The scallop biological unit/stock was defined as area XXX. Therefore PI 1.1.1 was scored by considering scallops in the area XXX as a single stock. This approach was considered appropriate due to the biology of scallops. 		

GPF3.2 Stakeholder involvement within CA ▲

See guidance GPF2.1, GPF2.2 and GPF2.3.

GPF3.3.2 Examples of indicator (proxy) data to score consequence ▲

Table GPF4 provides some examples of indicator (proxy) trend data that may be used to score consequence.

It should be noted that the list is not exhaustive but seeks to give an indication of the types of indicator data needed to score the subcomponents. Where there is limited indicator information, the consequence score should be scored as high-risk.

The team may support the interpretation of indicator and trend data with other information known about the fishery and the expert judgment of the team.

Table GPF4: Examples of indicator (proxy) data to score consequence

Subcomponent	Indicator/Proxies
Population size	Catch, effort and catch per unit effort (CPUE) time-series. Sex ratio in male-only fisheries.
Reproductive capacity	Size class indexes. Catch composition time-series (sex ratio).
Age/Size/Sex structure	Catch length/age index or time-series. Catch composition (sex ratio) time-series.
Geographic range	Time-series species distribution.

Where judgements about risk are uncertain, the consequence category with the lowest score (highest risk) that is still regarded as plausible is chosen.

In the application of the Consequence Analysis, the risk that the fishery poses on stock status is determined without the use of reference points. Measures and trends of fishing effort, landings, exploitation rates, biomass and recruitment estimates and spawning events before recruiting to the fishery are examples of indicators that can be used to determine the risk associated to the fishing activity. The Consequence Analysis is intended to be a measure of the risk that fishing poses to long-term recruitment dynamics.

Fisheries operating at full exploitation levels (the so-called large-scale fisheries) will likely score below the 80-mark level. Only in cases where available indicators provide evidence of recruitment not being adversely damaged will the score exceed the minimum pass mark of 60. On the other hand, fisheries operating at low exploitation levels in relation to the size of the stock and biology of the species are expected to obtain a higher score CA score, up to 100 in cases where the impact of the fishing activity cannot be differentiated from the natural variability for this population.

The team should score 80 where available information shows changes in the population subcomponent that can be reasonably attributable to the fishing activity, but these are of such a low magnitude that the impact of the fishery is considered to be minimal on the population size and dynamics.

The team should score 60 where available information shows changes to the population subcomponent attributed to the fishing activity and these changes are of such magnitude that they cannot be considered as minimal.

Examples of consequence score rationales for each subcomponent are shown below:

Examples:

Population size justification		CA score																						
Information on CPUE trends show stability over the last 20 years. Fishing mortality trends indicates that the fishery has occurred under low or very low exploitation rates relative to stock biomass. Recruitment indices showed no major changes in the last 10 years. It can be reasonably concluded that changes in the population due to fishing are of low magnitude that cannot be detectable against the natural variability of the population.		100																						
Annual production is estimated to be higher than the removals by the fishery. Analysis of CPUE time-series suggests that the fishery over 23 years has not had a significant detrimental impact on the stock, which is estimated to be still near the virgin biomass level.		80																						
Trends in catches indicate that biomass removed has been kept below any levels that could have an effect on population dynamics. Exploitation rates are estimated not to pose a risk on population size or population dynamics. The stock is considered to be above the point where recruitment could be impaired. The current catches are lower than they were 10-20 years ago.		80																						
Information on landings and CPUE trends show stability over the last 10 years.		80																						
<table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th>Year</th> <th>2003</th> <th>2004</th> <th>2005</th> <th>2006</th> <th>2007</th> <th>2008</th> <th>2009</th> <th>2010</th> <th>2011</th> <th>2012</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>CPUE</td> <td>978</td> <td>900</td> <td>950</td> <td>925</td> <td>1000</td> <td>1010</td> <td>975</td> <td>1023</td> <td>1099</td> <td>1050</td> </tr> </tbody> </table>		Year	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	CPUE	978	900	950	925	1000	1010	975	1023	1099	1050	
Year	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012														
CPUE	978	900	950	925	1000	1010	975	1023	1099	1050														
Fishing mortality trends indicate that the fishery has occurred under low exploitation rates with catch and effort decreasing over the last 10 years (due to low prices and high fuel). Recruitment indices showed no major changes in the period 2004–2012. The stock has recently increased. It cannot be concluded that changes in population due to fishing are not detectable against the natural variability of the population.																								
Information on fleet structure, fishing area and exploitation rates indicate that the stock is exploited at full exploitation rate. However, trends in exploitation rates, biomass and recruitment indicate that fishing is not adversely damaging recruitment in the long term. Surveys are used to estimate the abundance and distribution of commercial and pre-recruits. In addition to surveys, the status of the resource is evaluated from trends in CPUE from logbook and observer data. As the fishery is defined as fully developed and operating at full capacity it cannot be concluded that its impact on population size is minimal or its impact on dynamics is none.		60																						
Information on landing, effort, and fishing mortality indicates that the crab fishing is a fully developed fishery likely to be occurring at full exploitation rates. CPUE on fully recruit crab indicates a decreasing trend in abundance. However, CPUE for per recruit show that long-term recruitment dynamics are not adversely damaged.		60																						
Stock indicators on biomass show that biomass has decreased in recent years from peak levels reached in year 2005. The biomass level seems to be higher than the lowest level experienced at which recruitment was not impaired. Therefore, it can be concluded that the fishery has not adversely damaged the long-term recruitment dynamics.		60																						
Available evidence indicates that recruitment dynamics are adversely affected. Therefore, consequence is higher risk than 60. Spawning stock biomass (SSB) has continuously declined since 2001. The 2013 SSB is the lowest observed in the time-series. The fishing mortality has shown a declining trend since the mid-1980s; it has been relatively stable in recent years, but still is considered to remain high given current SSB levels. Recent recruitments have been lower than earlier in the time-series, with the 2011 recruitment being the lowest.		fail																						

Reproductive capacity justifications	CA score
A slow-growing, long-lived species (more than 40 years of age). The estimated age at 50% selectivity (22 years) is well above the age at 50% maturity (5.3 years). Individuals should therefore have more than 17 years of spawning before they enter the fishery, therefore ensuring the protection of a significant part of the adult population (survival of discards is assumed to be high). It can be concluded that the fishery has minimal impact on population size and no impact on dynamics.	80
The moderate to low exploitation rates, together with minimum landing size (MLS) that allows multiple spawning events indicates that the fishery has minimal impact on population dynamics. The status of the stock of crab in the area, informed by stock indicators on biomass and fishing mortality, is considered good.	80
The cockle stock is intensively fished (33% of the estimated biomass). Available evidence suggests that there may be a detectable change in reproductive capacity as cockles are caught in their second year of growth. The MLS implemented for this fishery allows for catching individuals in their second year of growth. A retained cockle is defined as one that is retained by a gauge having a square opening of 20 mm measured across each side. Cockles of this length are in their second year of growth and will have spawned at least once before being caught. The harvest strategy ensures that long-term recruitment dynamics is not adversely damaged by fishing.	60

Age/Size/sex structure justifications	CA score
Size frequency distribution of the species is available from a fully developed fishery, showing that recruitment is not being adversely damaged. However, the level of catch and the fleet structure do not enable a qualitative assessment to determine that the impact on population dynamics is minimal.	60
In a crab fishery, available evidence indicates that there is a detectable change in size/sex structure. However, information on abundance and recruitment indicates that long-term recruitment dynamics have not been adversely damaged. There appears to be a reduced number of large males of sufficient size to mate with the largest females, and that has the potential effect of reducing the reproductive capacity of these largest females. There is concern that reduced abundance of large male crabs may lead to sperm limitation and reduced levels of egg production if there are no males left in the population to mate with the larger females.	60

Geographic range justifications	CA score
With only 2 or 3 boats fishing, fishing effort is very low, with exploitation rates of only 1 - 2% per year, and, in some years, considerably less. Since the fishery began in 1989, it has been calculated that 1,132km ² have been swept by the gear, with most of that in the period 1990–1998. This represents only 2% of the known stock distribution area (i.e. surveyed area). During the last 5 years, fishing effort has been very low with an average annual swept area of only about 26km ² , and there is no evidence of serial depletion of grounds.	80

GPF4 Conducting a Productivity-Susceptibility Analysis (PSA)

GPF4.1.4 Assessment of main ▲

Assessment of 'main' species only considers species that are less resilient or commonly encountered by the UoA. Please refer to [MSC Fisheries Standard](#) and [Guidance to the MSC Fisheries Standard](#).

GPF4.1.5 Grouping species ▲

When evaluating PIs 2.1.1 or 2.2.1, the team may group species as an option for dealing with a high number of species (>15 species). The team may also wish to undertake a PSA on all species being considered in the assessment to allow for a score that is above 80 for a particular PI.

GPF4.1.5.a Example of grouping by species ▲

The taxonomic level at which species may be grouped should be determined by the team and be based on the Principle 2 species characteristics. This grouping should be no higher than the family taxonomic level.

Table GPF5 below represents a list of Principle 2 species in a fictional fishery. Before the site visit, the team determined that there is 1 group (with 15 species) and 8 separate species needing to be scored using the RBF for PI 2.1.1.

Table GPF5: Example of grouping by species

Example: Grouping by Species		
Species	Taxonomy (Order/Family)	Group
Yellowfin tuna (<i>Thunnus albacares</i>)	Perciformes/Scrombridae	Group 1
Bigeye tuna (<i>Thunnus obesus</i>)	Perciformes/Scrombridae	Group 1
Blackfin tuna (<i>Thunnus atlanticus</i>)	Perciformes/Scrombridae	Group 1
Bluefin tuna (<i>Thunnus thynnus</i>)	Perciformes/Scrombridae	Group 1
Cod (<i>Gadus morhua</i>)	Gadiformes/Gadidae	n/a
European anchovy (<i>Engraulis encrasicolus</i>)	Clupeiformes/Engraulidae	n/a
Flying fish (<i>Exocoetus obtusirostris</i>)	Beloniformes/Excoetidae	n/a
Flying halfbeak (<i>Euleptorhamphus velox</i>)	Beloniformes/Hemiramphidae	n/a
Grouper (<i>Epinephelus striatus</i>)	Perciformes/Serranidae	n/a
Porcupinefish (<i>Diodon hystrix</i>)	Tetraodontiformes/Diodontidae	n/a
Rainbow runner (<i>Elagatis bipinnulata</i>)	Perciformes/Carangidae	n/a
Remora (<i>Remora remora</i>)	Perciformes/Echeneidae	n/a

Atlantic mackerel (<i>Scomber scombrus</i>)	Perciformes/Scrombridae	Group 1
Pacific sierra (<i>Scomberomorus sierra</i>)	Perciformes/Scrombridae	Group 1
Wahoo (<i>Acanthocybium solandri</i>)	Perciformes/Scrombridae	Group 1
King mackerel (<i>Scomberomorus cavalla</i>)	Perciformes/Scrombridae	Group 1
Longtail tuna (<i>Thunnus tonggol</i>)	Perciformes/Scrombridae	Group 1
Slender tuna (<i>Allothunnus fallai</i>)	Perciformes/Scrombridae	Group 1
Bullet tuna (<i>Auxis rochei</i>)	Perciformes/Scrombridae	Group 1
Frigate tuna (<i>Auxis thazard</i>)	Perciformes/Scrombridae	Group 1
Leaping bonito (<i>Cybiosarda elegans</i>)	Perciformes/Scrombridae	Group 1
Butterfly kingfish (<i>Gasterochisma melampus</i>)	Perciformes/Scrombridae	Group 1
Atlantic bonito (<i>Sarda sarda</i>)	Perciformes/Scrombridae	Group 1

GPF4.1.5.b Scoring groups ▲

The scores of these species will determine the score for all species within the group.

At least 2 species within each taxonomic group should be scored using the PSA.

There may be instances where the same species is the most vulnerable according to a high-risk productivity score and through a qualitative process with stakeholders.

Productivity attributes can be scored ahead of the stakeholder meetings using information sources such as FishBase (fishbase.org).

The determination of which species is most at risk is made qualitatively based on knowledge of inherent species vulnerability, as well as frequency of interaction with the fishery, and level of damage done (e.g. released alive vs. always killed).

More than 2 species can be scored as appropriate.

GPF4.1.5.3 Determining PSA - MSC score for species groups ▲

The PSA-derived MSC score should be assigned equally to each of the species in the species group.

The RBF worksheet in Table GPF6 shows the results of the above-mentioned example.

The RBF worksheet automatically combines multiple scoring elements using the rules in Table PF7. Where there are multiple scoring elements, either use the results from the RBF worksheet or look at the rules in Table GPF7.

Table GPF6: Example of scoring most at-risk species

Species group	Representative species	PSA score	MSC score	Number of species in group	Final group score
Scrombridae	Bluefin tuna (<i>Thunnus thynnus</i>)	2.70	78.0	15	75
	Wahoo (<i>Acanthocybium solandri</i>)	2.89	71.7		

MSC Guidance to the Fisheries Certification Process v2.2

Table GPF7: Scoring elements and grouping species into the RBF worksheet

	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	I	J	K	L	M	N	O	P	Q	R	S	T	U	V	W	X	Y	Z	AA	AB	AC	AD	AE	AF
1	Only main species scored?				---	Productivity Scores [1-3]														Susceptibility Scores [1-3]					Cumulative only							
2	Scoring element	First of each scoring element	Species Grouping only ID 'At Risk' species with associated species group	Species Grouping only Number of species in species group which this species represents	Family name	Scientific name	Common name	Species type	Fishery descriptor	Average age at maturity	Average max age	Fecundity	Average max size	Average size at Maturity	Reproductive strategy	Trophic level	Density Dependence	Total Productivity (average)	Availability	Encounterability	Selectivity	Post-capture mortality	Total (multiplicative)	PSA Score	Catch (tons)	Weighting	Weighted Total	Weighted PSA Score	MSC PSA-derived score	Risk Category Name	MSC scoring guidepost	
3	1	First	Species Group 1	7	Scombridae	Thunnus thynnus	Bluefin tuna	Non-invertebrate	Purse seine UoA	2	3	1	3	2	1	3		2.14	3	3	3	1	1.85	2.70					78	Med	60-79	
4	2	First	Species Group 1	8	Scombridae	Acanthocybium solan	Wahoo	Non-invertebrate	Purse seine UoA	1	2	1	2	2	1	3		1.71	3	3	2	3	2.33	2.89					72	Med	60-79	
5	3	First			Gadidae	Gadus morhua	Cod	Non-invertebrate	Purse seine UoA	1	2	1	2	2	2	3		1.86	3	3	2	2	1.88	2.64					80	Low	≥80	
6	4	First			Engraulidae	Engraulis encrasicolus	European anchovy	Non-invertebrate	Purse seine UoA	1	1	1	1	1	1	2		1.14	2	2	3	3	1.88	2.20					91	Low	≥80	
7	5	First			Excoetidae	Exocoetus obtusirostr	Flying fish	Non-invertebrate	Purse seine UoA	1	1	1	1	1	1	2		1.14	1	1	3	3	1.20	1.66					96	Low	≥80	
8	6	First			Hemiramphidae	Euleptorhamphus velo	Flying halfbeak	Non-invertebrate	Purse seine UoA	2	2	2	1	1	2	2		1.71	2	2	3	3	1.88	2.54					83	Low	≥80	
9	7	First			Serranidae	Epinephelus striatus	Grouper	Non-invertebrate	Purse seine UoA	2	2	1	2	2	2	3		2.00	2	2	3	3	1.88	2.74					77	Med	60-79	
10	8	First			Didonidae	Diodon hystrix	Porcupinefish	Non-invertebrate	Purse seine UoA	1	2	1	1	1	1	3		1.43	2	2	2	3	1.58	2.13					93	Low	≥80	
11	9	First			Carangidae	Elagatis bipinnulata	Rainbow runner	Non-invertebrate	Purse seine UoA	2	3	2	2	2	1	3		2.14	2	3	2	3	1.88	2.85					73	Med	60-79	
12	10	First			Echeneidae	Remora remora	Remora	Non-invertebrate	Purse seine UoA	3	3	3	1	2	3	2		2.43	2	3	1	3	1.43	2.82					74	Med	60-79	
13																																
14																																

GPF4.1.5.4 ▲

Species grouping is optional, but it also implies that the score will be capped at 80. In order to achieve a score of above 80, all of the species will need to be assessed using the PSA.

GPF4.3 PSA Step 1: Score the productivity attributes ▲

The level of fishing impact a species can sustain depends on the inherent productivity of the species. The productivity determines how rapidly a species can recover from depletion or impact due to fishing. The productivity of a species is determined by species attributes such as longevity, growth rate, fecundity, recruitment and natural mortality. Information about productivity attributes can be found in scientific literature and websites like FishBase (fishbase.org).

GPF4.3.1 ▲

The team should look at various sources of information to determine correct productivity characteristics for scoring elements being assessed under the PSA.

GPF4.3.2 ▲

Cut-off values for scoring the productivity attributes as low, medium and high were developed after considering the distribution of attribute values for a wide range of taxa from within Australia. In testing the approach in subsequent discussions around the world and validating the attributes against intrinsic rate of increase (r), we have improved our understanding to recognise that taxa-specific cut-offs, and geographic (tropical, vs. temperate, vs. deep sea) may be appropriate. This can be further improved by additional research, and MSC work is ongoing to progress this.

Guidance to Table PF4 Productivity attributes and scores – density dependence ▲

The PSA assessment of invertebrate fisheries might be improved if taking into account their particularities.

Depensatory effects (Allee effects) can arise from the reduced probability of fertilisation, and they should therefore be taken into consideration when scoring species productivity.

It is suggested that depensatory effects may have a profound effect on the resilience of marine invertebrates to fishing mortality, as shown in some crabs and lobsters, and often also sedentary bivalves.

The density-dependent attribute should be scored as 3 (high risk, low productivity) in cases where the species slow down the rate of population growth at low densities (depensatory dynamics). On the other side, species showing compensatory dynamics at low densities should be scored as 1 (low risk, high productivity) because density dependence acts to stabilise the populations.

Lack of evidence should not be interpreted as evidence that depensatory dynamics are rare and unimportant. In the absence of information on depensatory dynamics, or where no justification is provided supporting lower risk scores (1 or 2), the highest risk score (3, low productivity) should be used.

GPF4.4 PSA Step 2: Score the susceptibility attributes ▲

The level of fishing impact that a scoring species can sustain depends on its vulnerability or susceptibility to capture or damage by the fishery activities. The susceptibility of a species is determined by attributes such as the degree of overlap between the distribution of the fishery and the distribution of the species; and whether the species occurs at the same depth in the water column as the fishing gear.

GPF4.4.1 ▲

Susceptibility is estimated as the product of 4 independent aspects; Areal overlap (availability), encounterability, selectivity and post-capture mortality (PCM).

If there are no other fisheries listed that affect the stock, only the susceptibility of the species to the UoA should be scored.

GPF4.4.3.a ▲

Where a species is scored cumulatively as set out in requirements in PF4.3, the team should list all other fisheries or MSC UoAs that have an impact on the stock. In the 'MSC RBF worksheet' the team should manually input data on catch per gear/fishery affecting the stock (for PI 1.1.1 column W, for PI 2.1.1 and PI 2.2.1, column Y).

GPF4.4.3.b ▲

Where catch percentages are unknown or too uncertain to make a determination on which species are 'main' see [MSC Guidance to the Fisheries Standard](#).

GPF4.4.4 ▲

"MSC UoAs" refers to those UoAs that are in assessment or certified at the time the UoA announces its assessment or reassessment on the MSC website and that have main species in common.

GPF4.4.4.1.a ▲

This could be tonnage of total catch for each of the fisheries being considered.

GPF4.4.4.1.b ▲

The decision on assigned weightings needs to be made following consultation with stakeholders.

GPE4.4.5 ▲

Example

Catch data indicates that the UoA (longline fishery) catches approximately 1000t of the target species Atlantic cod. The catch data of the gillnet fishery that also retains Atlantic cod from the same stock cannot be estimated. During the RBF stakeholder workshop stakeholders agreed that the longline catch of 1000t comprises approximately 40% of the total catch while the gillnet fishery contributes about 10% of total catch. The weighting score for the longline fishery will be 2 and the weighting score for the gillnet fishery will be 1.

GPF4.4.6 ▲

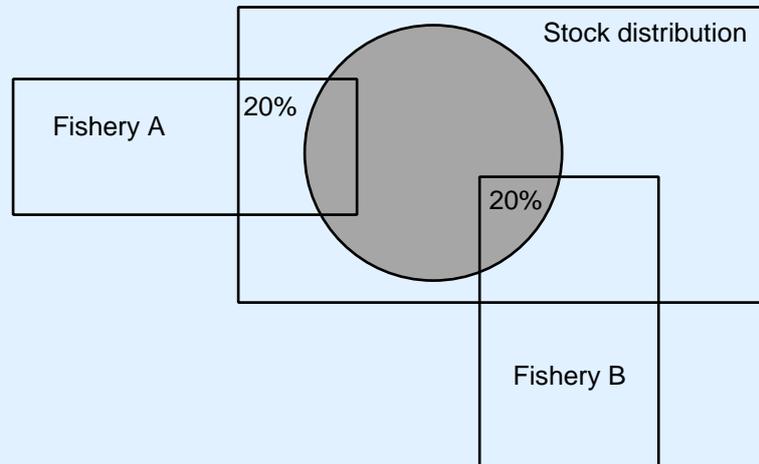
The areal overlap is the sum of the total percentage overlap of all fishery activity with the areal concentration of a stock. For example, if there are 2 fisheries both affecting 20% of the distribution of the species, the result would be 40% overlap, and a high-risk score awarded.

Estimation of overlap should take any uneven distribution or concentration of the stock into account, including consideration of core and marginal ranges.

Example: Areal overlap

A demersal species has a wide stock distribution. However, due to its preferred habitat, the species is found in the area shaded in grey for 95% of the time. Such behavioural patterns reduce the overlap between the species and the fishing activity (from 40% to ~20%) of fishery A and B (if considering the susceptibility cumulatively and this should be considered in scoring) (Figure GPF1). If the species in the example showed migratory behaviour the situation would be different.

Figure GPF1: Scoring areal overlap



This introduces appropriate precaution in the case where neither qualitative nor quantitative data is available.

Where a fishery overlaps a large proportion of a stock distribution range the risk is high because the species has no refuge, and the potential for impact is high.

GPF4.4.6.d ▲

Example

For example, for species that are known to school, and when the gear interacts with the schools, a high-risk score should be awarded for this attribute.

GPF4.4.7 ▲

Low, medium and high should be interpreted based on the likelihood of a gear encountering a species.

Where a fishery overlaps a large proportion of a stock distribution range, the risk is high because the species has no refuge, and the potential for impact is high. Table GPF8 below shows an example of how to score encounterability.

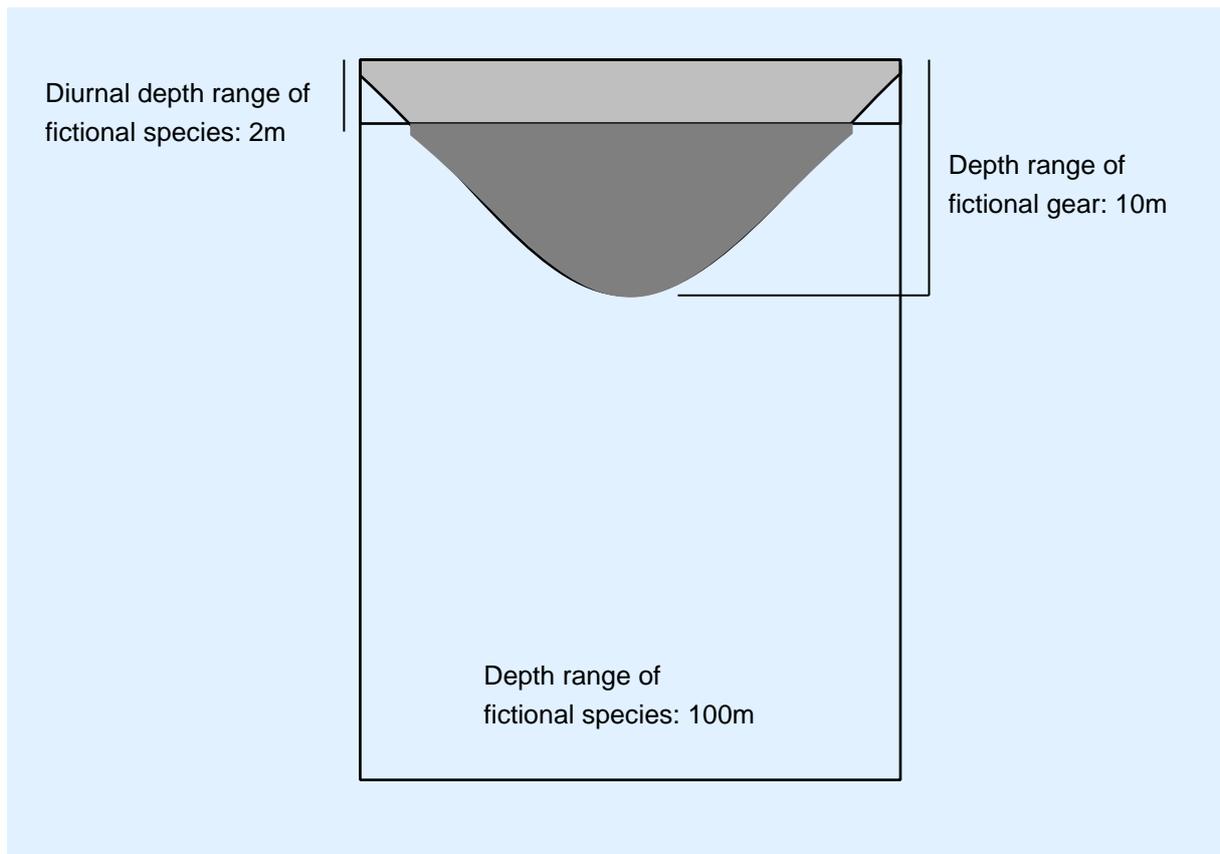
Encounterability should also be scored as the sum of the depth range of gear types, so if 2 gear types are deployed at depth ranges where more than 30% of the concentration of a species are likely to occur, this should be scored as high risk.

Each fishery will have the same encounterability score as it is an aggregate of all gear types affecting the stock. It is assumed that encounterability would be scored as high-risk for a targeted species.

Table GPF8: Example of scoring encounterability

Scenario	Encounterability score
Pelagic species has a total depth range of 0-100m, and the depth range of the gear is 0-10m.	Low
Pelagic species has a total depth range of 0-100m, and the depth range of the gear is 0-10m. If the diurnal behavioural patterns are targeted by a fishery that operates at night this greatly increases the overlap of the gear with the species. See Figure GPF2.	High
The species is known to migrate diurnally, and the gear interacts with a high concentration of the species at a particular time of the day.	High
If the fishery uses a gillnet, the chances of encounter for lobsters living in crevices is low.	Low
If a pot fishery uses attractive bait, the chance of encounter for lobsters is high.	High
A species occurring principally near the bottom will have low encounterability from a gear fishing in mid-water.	Low
A pot fishery would have high encounterability even in a highly rugged environment if it uses bait as an attractant.	High
Target species	High
Pelagic species has a total depth range of 0–100m, and the depth range of the gear is 0–50m.	Medium
A benthopelagic species inhabits both the sea floor and the area just above it (e.g. up to 50m from the sea bottom). The species has a total depth range of 200–400m. A mid-water gear with a depth range of 50–250m will have medium encounterability with this species.	Medium

Figure GPF2: Example of scoring encounterability



GPF4.4.8 ▲

Selectivity provides an estimate of retention by the fishing gear and is scored based on the risk that the gear operation retains individuals smaller than the size at maturity.

The assessment of risk should be based on review of empirical or analogous catch profile data or should be considered unlikely (or improbable) based on information for the species, fishing gear and operation of the fishery.

GPF4.4.8.c ▲

The team should score the selectivity of the gear type considering its potential to retain immature fish. 2 elements have been defined in order to adequately assess the selectivity attribute.

When scoring the element (a), the team should determine the frequency of deployments in which immature fish are caught. The team should only consider the frequency and not the number or proportion of juveniles caught. For example:

- If juveniles are caught in 70% of gear deployments, susceptibility score for element (a) is 3 (high susceptibility).
- If juveniles are caught in 70% of gear deployments but the proportion of juveniles in each deployment is very low, susceptibility score is still 3 (high susceptibility).
- If juveniles are caught in only 1% of gear deployments, but when it occurs the proportion of juveniles is very high (e.g. 80%), susceptibility score is still 1 (low susceptibility).

When scoring the element (b) the team should focus on determining the potential of the gear/fishing method to retain juveniles or, in other words the ability of the juveniles to escape or avoid that particular gear.

GPF4.4.9.a ▲

In assessing the probability that if a species is captured it would be released in a condition that would permit subsequent survival, the team may consider for example: biological factors that may limit the potential of a species to be captured alive; handling practices of the fishery or fisheries being considered; the time taken to clear discards from the deck, etc.

Where possible, observer data should be verified in face-to-face observer meetings to make sure that the observer is qualified to identify the species concerned.

GPF4.4.10 ▲

Examples are provided in Table GPF9 below to assist consideration of whether an adjustment to a risk score is warranted.

Table GPF9: Examples of adjustment to a risk score

Attribute	Justification for adjustment
Areal overlap	<p>The behavioural patterns of a species may increase their susceptibility to fishing. For instance, a species may have a large distribution but displays schooling behaviour that the fishery encounters, so the risk score should be adjusted up to ensure the risk is properly considered as part of the assessment.</p> <p>The information to score area overlap in the fishery region is quite coarse. Observer input may be used to adjust areal overlap scores for some species. If qualified observers report very low numbers of a species, say only 1 seen during 10 years' experience on the fishing vessels, then areal overlap may be changed to low. If the observer reports seeing the species between 33% and 66% of days spent on the fishing grounds, then areal overlap is rescored as medium. If the species is seen on more than 66% of days, then the areal overlap score cannot be reduced from "high". Unless there are independent field observations (non-fishers) during commercial operations, it is not appropriate to override areal overlap scores.</p>
Encounterability	<p>Encounterability is scored by estimating the overlap with the deployed fishing gear. The dominant habitat, and hence area occupied for reptiles and mammals is the very upper ocean (epipelagic zone). These air-breathing species are vulnerable to drowning before the gear is recovered to the fishing vessel. As a result, the default encounterability score for these air-breathing groups is "high". In fisheries that have observer programs, encounterability scores may be reduced from a "high" score. For example, if an observer sees sharks every day he/she observes fishing but the sharks never approach the gear or take fish off the hooks, then encounterability is rescored as low. For fisheries without independent field observations during commercial fishing (e.g. observer programs), it is not appropriate to override encounterability scores.</p> <p>The behavioural patterns of a species that may increase its susceptibility to fishing. For instance, a species may have a high depth range because it migrates diurnally so a high concentration of the stock could be encountered by the fishing gear. In this example, the risk score should be adjusted up to ensure the risk is properly considered as part of the assessment.</p>

Selectivity	Selectivity overrides are not appropriate.
Post-capture mortality (PCM)	For all species retained in the fishery, post-capture mortality is high. PCM is scored as high unless there is information that indicates that animals are released alive. Observers can also provide independent verification of life status of released individuals. Where observers can verify that fishers regularly release >66% (>33%) of individuals of a given species alive during normal fishing operations and there is evidence of survivorship, then the score is changed to low (med). For some fisheries, additional data on PCM may also be available from field experiments.

GPF4.5 PSA Step 3: Determine the PSA score and equivalent MSC score

GPF4.5.1 ▲

This is done automatically using the 'MSC RBF worksheet' for RBF assessments.

PSA score is automatically rounded to 2 decimal points and MSC score per scoring element is rounded to the nearest whole number.

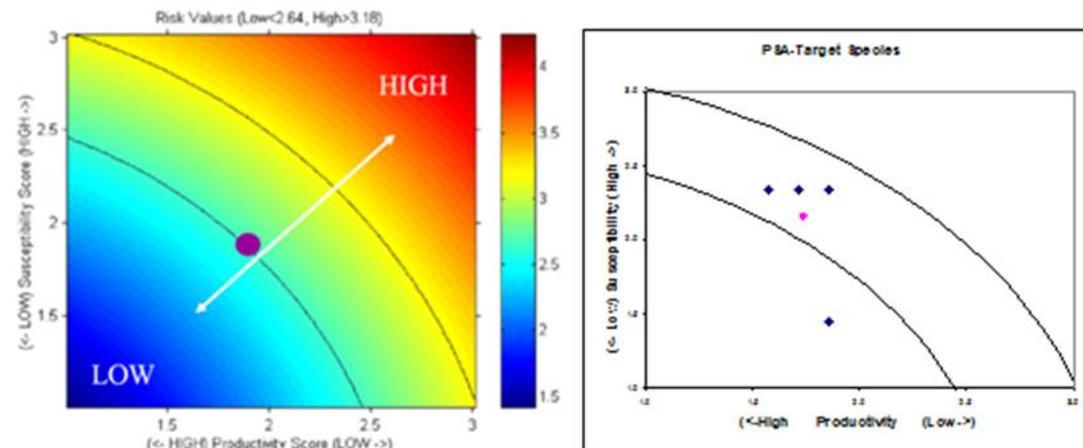
Box GPF1: Calculation of the overall risk score

Calculation of Euclidean distance:

For each component unit (e.g. species) the attributes for productivity are scored [1 3] (high, medium, low productivity). These attribute scores are averaged to provide an overall productivity score in the interval [1 3]. Similarly, for each unit the attributes within the 4 aspects of susceptibility are also scored [1 3] (low, medium, and high susceptibility). These aspects are multiplied and rescaled to the interval [1 3] to provide a susceptibility score. These 2 scores are then plotted on the PSA diagnostic plot. A single risk score is calculated as the Euclidean distance from the nominal origin (0.5, 0.7), calculated as $R = \sqrt{(P^2 + S^2)}$; where R is the risk score, P is the productivity score, and S the susceptibility score. This single risk score allows a ranking of all units considered.

The divisions between risk categories and hence Scoring Guideposts are based on dividing the area of the PSA plots into equal thirds, as shown in Figure GPF3.

Figure GPF3: Examples of diagnostic charts for displaying PSA values for each species



Left chart: Low-risk species have high productivity and low susceptibility, while high-risk species have low productivity and high susceptibility. The curved lines divide the potential risk scores into thirds on the basis of the Euclidean distance from the origin (0, 0).

Right chart: Example PSA plot for a set of target species. Note the curved lines that divide the risk space into equal thirds.

When assessing PIs 1.1.1, 2.1.1 and 2.3.1 using the RBF, the quadratic equation used for the PSA is:

$$\text{MSC Score} = -11.965(\text{PSA})^2 + 32.28(\text{PSA}) + 78.259$$

There is a direct quadratic relationship ($R^2=1$) between overall PSA scores and MSC score equivalents. This has been derived by setting the lowest possible risk score (i.e. all attributes score low risk) as equivalent to an MSC score of 100 and setting the lower and upper bounds of the “medium risk” range as equivalent to MSC scores of 60 and 80, respectively. A curve through these points is described by the conversion equation above.

However, when scoring data-deficient scoring elements in PI 2.2.1, a different quadratic equation is used in order to reflect the precautionary levels expected for this PI, as outlined in Section GPF1.

$$\text{MSC Score} = -5.8(\text{PSA})^2 + 6.9(\text{PSA}) + 105.0$$

GPF5 **Scoring the fishery using the RBF for species Performance Indicators (PIs 1.1.1, 2.1.1, 2.2.1 and 2.3.1)**

GPF5.1.1.1 ▲

In the MSC RBF worksheet the CA score can be manually inputted. This generates the MSC score for each PI 1.1.1 scoring element automatically using rules set out in Table PF7.

GPF5.2.2 ▲

In the MSC RBF worksheet, where there are multiple scoring elements and they are all data-deficient the final PI score is automatically calculated in the ‘automated scoring’ tab.

GPF5.3.1.1 ▲

The term “additional information” should be interpreted as any other relevant information not specifically addressed in PF3.3 (determining the CA score), PF4.3 (scoring productivity attributes) or PF4.4 (scoring susceptibility attributes). The use of additional information does not exempt the team from the requirement of assessing all required information in the sections above and awarding the more precautionary score where the required information is limited.

GPF6 **Setting conditions using the RBF for species Performance Indicators (PIs 1.1.1, 2.1.1, 2.2.1 and 2.3.1)**

GPF6.1.2 ▲

A CAB may elect to test whether the proposed Client Action Plan will have the desired effect at the time of agreeing corrective actions by re-running the PSA.

The team may use PSA results to assist with condition setting, by identifying the set of productivity and susceptibility attributes that have contributed to a high risk. The fishery could be then asked to reduce the risk by implementing changes in the identified attributes (i.e. by the setting of a condition related to reducing susceptibility).

Since productivity attributes are inherent to the species, these attributes cannot be changed through fisheries improvements. Where individual productivity attributes have been defaulted to “high risk” because of lack of information, these risk scores could be reduced if additional studies revealed the risk level was actually lower. For example, if the risk score for a particular secondary species was due to high encounterability and high PCM, then the corrective action might be to restrict fishing to night time or reduce the mortality when that species is captured. These actions can even be tested, by simulating changing the PSA attribute scores and observing whether the risk category changes.

It would be important to ensure that any future RBF score with the corrective action proposed (e.g. alternative gear) did not identify a consequential problem for another, currently unaffected species.

GPF6.1.3 ▲

Although the fishery does not have empirical or analytical reference points for that species at initial assessment, for target species, proxy data is needed to score the consequence of the fishing activity on the target species. In the certificate lifetime the fishery is expected to develop empirical or analytical reference points by gathering more information on proxies and indicators. If the fishery develops empirical reference points for the species it can use the default assessment tree at consequent MSC assessments.

Example:

Fishery X assessed its target species using the RBF, because they had 5 years of CPUE data had not used the indicator to develop reference points. Target species scored 80 with the CA on population size (using CPUE data) and 80 with the PSA, an MSC score of 80 was assigned. Once MSC certified, the fishery implemented a detailed on-board logbook system which allowed detailed data on length/age and catch composition to be collected that was then used to develop reference points for the stock. At reassessment Fishery X had developed both outcome and trigger (empirical) reference points which allowed it to score PI 1.1.1 using the default assessment tree.

GPF7 Conducting the Consequence Spatial Analysis (CSA) ▲

Background

The CSA was structured around a set of attributes that describe gear impacts (consequence) and the habitat (spatial) for each habitat being affected by different fishing gears. The CSA methodology and attributes were based on the ‘Ecological Risk Assessment for the Effects of Fishing’ methodology (Hobday et al., 2007⁶, Williams et al., 2011⁷), which was derived from images, expert opinion, and scientific literature. Both the method and attributes were modified to enable their application to MSC assessments.

The CSA consists of the following steps:

- **CSA Step 1:** Define the habitat(s).

⁶ Hobday, A. J., Smith, A., Webb, H., Daley, R., Wayte, S., Bulman, C., Dowdney, J., Williams, A., Sporcic, M., Dambacher, J., Fuller, M. and Walker, T., 2007. Ecological risk assessment for the effects of fishing: methodology. Report R04/1072 for the Australian Fisheries Management Authority, Canberra.

⁷ Williams, A., Dowdney, J., Smith, A.D.M., Hobday, A.J., and Fuller, M., 2011. Evaluating impacts of fishing on benthic habitats: A risk assessment framework applied to Australian fisheries. *Fisheries Research* 112(3):154-167.

- **CSA Step 2:** Score the consequence attributes.
- **CSA Step 3:** Score the spatial attributes.
- **CSA Step 4:** Determine the CSA score and equivalent MSC score.

The CSA examines attributes of each habitat associated with the UoA in order to provide a relative measure of the risk on the scoring element (habitat) from fishing activities.

GPF7.1 Preparation

GPF7.1.3 ▲

Refer to [Guidance to the MSC Fisheries Standard](#) for what constitutes an appropriate level of information to score the default assessment tree.

GPF7.1.5 ▲

Assessment of “main” habitats considers habitats that are commonly encountered by the UoA or vulnerable marine ecosystems (VMEs). Refer to [MSC Fisheries Standard Annex SA3.13.3](#), the subclauses, and the associated guidance.

GPF7.1.7 ▲

In the absence of detailed scientific information, it should be possible to assess the UoA’s impacts based on the extent to which fishing activity is demonstrably ‘precautionary’ or of ‘less risk’. The CSA requires the team to consider the worst-case scenario. For example, if fishing takes place on both the outer continental shelf and slope, the natural disturbance score should be 3 and not 2, reflecting the higher potential risk of impact on the slope. Another example is that the removability of biota score should be 2 if a Danish seine UoA affects both low, robust biota and erect, medium biota.

The CSA also requires the team to consider UoA specifics in the absence of credible evidence, information, or logical reasoning to the contrary. For example, the addition of rockhoppers to trawl gear allows the UoA to contact previously inaccessible areas, which may contain more complex habitats. The impacts on these more complex habitats should be considered when scoring the attributes. Conversely, some modifications may lessen the gear’s impact on the habitat, which should also be considered.

GPF7.2 Stakeholder involvement within the CSA ▲

See Section PF2.3 for more information on stakeholder involvement within the RBF.

GPF7.3 CSA Step 1: Define the habitat(s)

GPF7.3.1 ▲

Refer to [MSC Fisheries Standard Annex SA3.13.5](#), the subclauses, and the associated guidance for more details on how to interpret the ‘managed area’.

GPF7.3.3 ▲

The examples of biomes, sub-biomes, and features and their associated depths in Table PF9 are provided to emphasise the large differences that exist in the fauna and their life-history characteristics between depth zones and to provide a way to estimate the spatial extent of habitats (refer to the spatial overlap attribute below). For example, the extent of sediment plains on the outer shelf could be roughly estimated and differentiated from sediment plains on the slope.

GPF7.4 CSA Step 2: Score the consequence attributes ▲

The 2 habitat-productivity attributes' scores are multiplied by 2 to reflect the increased importance of these 2 attributes. The consequence score is then the average of all habitat-productivity and gear-habitat interaction attribute scores.

GPF7.4.1 ▲

Biotas have different intrinsic rates of growth, reproduction, and regeneration, which are also variable in different conditions of temperature, nutrients, and productivity (Williams et al., 2010⁸). Habitat depth is an appropriate proxy for regeneration of biota because rates of growth and reproduction will typically be slower in deeper water where temperature and nutrient availability are lower (Hobday et al., 2007). Further, the type of biota may be relevant since some (e.g. corals, crinoids, large sponges) grow at a very slow rate compared to others (e.g. encrusting species).

GPF7.4.2 ▲

Biotas subject to greater natural disturbances have a greater intrinsic ability to recover from impacts. Common natural disturbances result from wave action and tidal movements, but other factors, such as local currents, storm surge, flooding, temperature fluctuations, and predation, may also be relevant. Habitat depth is considered a suitable proxy for natural disturbance because deeper habitats typically experience fewer or no natural disturbances.

GPF7.4.4 ▲

Removability of biota is influenced by the size, height, robustness, flexibility, and structural complexity of the attached biota. Large, erect, inflexible, or delicate biota is more vulnerable to physical damage or removal than small, low, flexible, robust, or deep-burrowing biota. Rugosity refers to the ridged nature of the organism. In general, more rugose (i.e. complex) organisms are more vulnerable to the impacts of fishing. The interactions between a high diversity of biota types and non-standardised fishing gear can make this attribute difficult to score. For example, demersal trawls can have a range of factors influencing removability, such as footrope weight, use of chains, roller or bobbin size, bridle configuration, and door weight. The full range of possible interactions should be considered.

GPF7.4.5 ▲

For example, intermediate-sized rock fragments (6 cm to 3 m) that form attachment sites for sessile fauna can be permanently removed. While soft sediment is less resistant to impact, it is generally more resilient because it accumulates relatively rapidly and is altered by burrowing fauna.

GPF7.4.6 ▲

The substratum hardness attribute considers whether or not the seabed will be degraded by contact with fishing gear. For example, hard rocky bottom is intrinsically more resistant to impact.

GPF7.4.7 ▲

Substratum ruggedness is scored based on the concept that the access of gear to the habitat is related to the ruggedness of the substratum. For example, large rocks and steep slopes make an area less accessible to mobile gear.

⁸ Williams, A., Schlacher, T.A., Rowden, A.A., Althaus, F., Clark, M.R., Bowden, D.A., Stewart, R., Bax, N.J., Consalvey, M. and Kloser, R.J., 2010. 'Seamount megabenthic assemblages fail to recover from trawling impacts'. *Marine Ecology* 31: 183-199.

GPF7.4.8 ▲

For example, fishing impact can be greater on steep slopes because they are more prone to landslide damage.

GPF7.5 CSA Step 3: Score the spatial attributes ▲

The spatial score is the geometric mean of the spatial attributes.

GPF7.5.1 ▲

Gear footprint can be considered in terms of gear size, weight, and mobility. This attribute measures the level of impact by considering the frequency and intensity of gear disturbance on the habitat. The gear footprint scores are based on the number of encounters needed to have an impact on structural biota in a unit area.

If the UoA's gear does not fit into these encounter categories, the team should provide justification for increasing or decreasing the default gear footprint score (Table PF16).

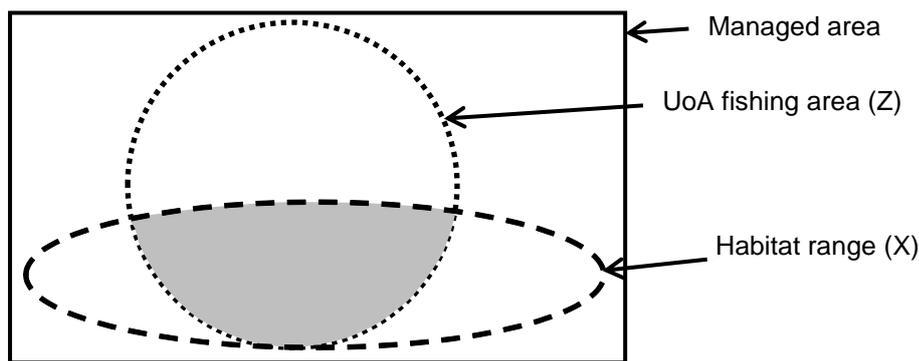
Table GPF10: Number of encounters needed to cause impact (modified from Williams et al., 2011)

Gear type	Many encounters needed to cause impact	Some encounters needed to cause impact	Single encounter needed to cause impact
Hand collection	✓		
Handline	✓		
Demersal longline		✓	
Bottom gill net or other entangling net		✓	
Danish seine		✓	
Demersal trawl (including pair, otter twin-rig, and otter multi-rig)			✓
Dredge			✓

GPF7.5.2 ▲

The spatial overlap attribute is the overlap of a habitat's range in the "managed area" with the UoA's fishing area. It is calculated as the UoA's fishing area (Z) divided by the habitat's range within the "managed area" (X) (Figure GPF4). Refer to GPF7.3.3 and Table PF9 for details on estimating the spatial extent of habitats.

Figure GPF4: Visualising the spatial overlap attribute



Spatial overlap (S) = proportion of X overlapped by Z

GPF7.5.3 ▲

The encounterability attribute is a measure of how likely the UoA is to encounter the habitat within the “managed area”.

Example:

For example, a UoA using semi-pelagic gear that rarely affects a benthic habitat would likely have an encounterability score of 0.5 for that habitat. Similarly, a demersal trawl will have low encounterability with a habitat that is confined to heavy reef areas because the trawl cannot operate in such areas. Conversely, a UoA that uses a gear that targets a certain habitat will have high encounterability with that habitat.

GPF7.5.4-7.5.10 Additional guidance on spatial overlap and encounterability ▲

The spatial overlap and encounterability attributes should be estimated based on the most recent spatial distribution of fishing by the UoA. The assessed fishing area of the UoA should be modified according to the gear being used.

For instance, if longlines can be used only in part of the “managed area” (e.g. due to habitat characteristics that do not allow for longline usage throughout the entire area), this part is what should be assessed here.

GPF7.6 CSA Step 4: Determine the CSA score and equivalent MSC score ▲

Calculation of Euclidean distance

For each scoring element (i.e. habitat), the attributes for consequence are scored 1-3 (low, medium, and high). Both of the habitat-productivity attributes’ scores are doubled, and then all habitat-productivity and gear-habitat interaction attribute scores are averaged to provide an overall consequence score in the interval. Similarly, the spatial attributes are also scored 1-3 (low, medium, and high) though half scores are possible. The spatial score is derived as a geometric mean of the 3 spatial scores. The consequence and spatial scores then produce a single risk score calculated as

the Euclidean distance from the nominal origin [0,0]: $R = \sqrt{(C^2 + S^2)}$; where R is the risk score, C is the consequence score, and S the spatial score.

Conversion of the CSA score

The CSA score is converted to an MSC score using the quadratic equation:

$$\text{MSC Score} = -9.1(\text{CSA})^2 + 22.4(\text{CSA}) + 86.8$$

There is a direct quadratic relationship ($R^2=1$) between overall CSA scores and MSC score equivalents. This has been derived setting the highest possible risk score (i.e. all attributes score high risk) as equivalent to an MSC score of 0; setting the lowest possible risk score (i.e. all attributes score low risk) as equivalent to an MSC score of 100; and setting the lower and upper bounds of the medium risk range as equivalent to MSC scores of 60 and 80, respectively.

GPF7.6.3.1 ▲

If additional information is available to justify modifying the final MSC score, the team should use it to adjust the score either upwards or downwards by a maximum of 10 points.

Such information not previously considered within the CSA may, for example, include gear footprint modifications that lessen the gear's impact by lessening the gear's size, weight, or mobility.

All MSC score adjustments should be based on the attributes scored and on how the UoA varies from the scores provided within the scoring tables for each attribute. Examples of these score adjustments are as follows:

Example:

- The UoA is fishing with a Danish seine that has been modified to be lighter and have less bottom contact. The weight of the gear is relevant to the gear footprint attribute, and the lessened bottom contact could be relevant to the removability of biota, removability of substratum, and/or encounterability attributes; therefore, it is likely appropriate to increase the final MSC score.
- A demersal trawl UoA with the addition of rockhoppers will have an increased impact (given the increased ability to access previously untrawlable areas) when compared to trawls without such additions. It would likely be appropriate to adjust the final MSC score downwards since this type of gear has increased impact on the removability of biota and removability of substratum attributes as well as increased spatial overlap and/or encounterability attribute scores.

GPF7.7 Setting conditions using the CSA

GPF7.7.1 ▲

Since some of the CSA attributes are inherent to the habitat (i.e. consequence attributes), these attributes are not likely to be changed through UoA improvements. Where attributes have been defaulted to "high risk" because of a lack of information, these risk scores could be reduced if additional studies revealed the risk level were lower.

However, UoA improvements can lead to changes within the spatial attributes. For example, UoAs can implement gear modifications that lessen their habitat impacts, UoAs can change their spatial footprint by avoiding high-score scoring elements (e.g. corals), and/or UoAs can make other spatial changes that will result in lower-risk impacts.

A CAB may elect to test whether the proposed Client Action Plan will have the desired effect at the time of agreeing corrective actions by re-running the CSA. For instance, if the proposed Client Action Plan included the decrease of removability of a biota by using a different type of gear, it would be important to ensure that any future CSA score with the alternative gear did not identify a consequential problem for another, currently unaffected habitat.

GPF8 **Conducting a Scale Intensity Consequence Analysis (SICA)**

GF8.1 **Preparation ▲**

The 5 MSC SICA steps are summarised below:

- **SICA Step 1:** Prepare a SICA scoring template for each ecosystem.
- **SICA Step 2:** Score spatial scale of the fishing activity.
- **SICA Step 3:** Score temporal scale of the fishing activity.
- **SICA Step 4:** Score the intensity of the fishing activity.
- **SICA Step 5:** Score the consequence resulting from the scale and intensity of the fishing activity for the most vulnerable subcomponent of the ecosystem.

GF8.2 **Stakeholder involvement within SICA ▲**

Background work should have been undertaken to ensure that time with stakeholders can be focused on new issues.

GF8.4 **SICA Step 2: Score spatial scale of fishing activity potentially having an impact on the ecosystem**

GF8.4.2 ▲

The scale score is not used to mathematically determine the consequence score. It is used in the process of making judgements about the level of intensity at SICA Step 4. 2 different activities that scored the same for spatial scale might have quite different outcomes for the intensity score.

Example of use of Table PF19:

If fishing activity (e.g. capture by longline) takes place within 20% of the overall distribution of the ecosystem, then the spatial scale is scored as 3. This needs to be the overlap of the fishing activity of the Unit of Assessment with the ecosystem distribution.

GF8.5 **SICA Step 3: Score temporal scale of fishing activity potentially having an impact on the ecosystem**

GF8.5.2 ▲

Examples of scoring temporal scale:

- If the fishing activity occurs daily, the temporal scale is scored as 6.
- If fishing activity occurs once per year, then the temporal scale is scored as 3.
- It may be more logical for some activities to consider the aggregate number of days that an activity occurs. For example, if the activity “fishing” was undertaken by 10 boats during the same 150 days of the year, the score is 4. If the same 10 boats each spend 30 non-overlapping days fishing, the temporal scale of the activity is a sum of 300 days, indicating that a score of 6 is appropriate.

- In the case where the activity occurs over many days, but only every 10 years, the number of days divided by the number of years in the cycle is used to determine the score. For example, 100 days of an activity every 10 years averages 10 days every year, so a score of 3 is appropriate.

GF8.6 SICA Step 4: Score the intensity of the relevant activity

GF8.6.1 ▲

The intensity score should be consistent with the spatial and temporal scores.

Example of scoring intensity:

For example, if spatial and temporal scales are scored as high-risk, the same would be expected when scoring intensity. The overall intensity of fishing activity depends upon the distribution and dynamics of the stock being exploited.

GF8.6.1.2 ▲

The intensity score should reflect the frequency and extent of fishing activity.

Scale scores are not used to mathematically determine the consequence score, they are used in the process of making judgements about level of intensity. 2 different activities that scored the same for scale score might have quite different outcomes for the intensity score.

Examples of intensity scores:

- Spatial scale score = low, and temporal scale score = low.

Intensity score = low

Justification: The spatial overlap between the fishing activity and the ecosystem distribution is extremely low and the fishing activity occurs very rarely. This combination of scale scores indicates that the intensity of this fishery is negligible.

- Spatial scale score = high, and temporal scale score = high.

Intensity score = high

Justification: The fishing activity covers almost half of the spatial distribution of the stock and the fishing activity occurs frequently. This combination of scale scores indicates that the intensity of this fishery is severe.

- Spatial scale score = low, and temporal scale score = high.

Intensity score = high

Justification: The spatial overlap between the fishing activity and the stock distribution is extremely low, and the fishing activity occurs frequently. This combination of scale scores indicates that the intensity of this fishery is severe as the fishing activity has frequent impacts on a small part of the stock.

GF8.7 SICCA Step 5: Identify the most vulnerable subcomponent of the ecosystem, and score the consequence of the activity on the subcomponent

GF8.7.2 ▲

Subcomponents are indicators of health. Selecting the subcomponent to score should reflect which of the subcomponents have been most affected by the fishing activity.

GF8.7.4 ▲

If the scale and intensity are scored as medium or high risk, additional information would need to be used to rationalise a low or medium risk score for consequence.

Stakeholder perception should be combined with additional qualitative and quantitative information to support the consequence score. Without such information, the consequence score should be scored as high risk. The fishery would fail in such instances.

GF8.7.4.1 ▲

Where attributes have been defaulted to high risk because of a lack of information, these risk scores could be reduced if additional studies revealed the risk level was actually lower. For example, if the SICCA results in a consequence score of 80 but additional information is available and presented that justifies raising this score, a final MSC score of 85 may be given.

End of Annex GPF Guidance

End of Guidance to the Fisheries Certification Process